



DRAFT

CORRIDOR INTRINSIC QUALITIES INVENTORY

SCENIC QUALITIES

June 2001

**Highway 1 in Monterey County
along the Big Sur Coast
SLO-1-71.4/74.3
MON-1-0.0/72.3**

Prepared for: Caltrans District 5

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Appendices

- Appendix A Scenic Qualities Map Sheets
- Appendix B Summary of Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop and Sample Photographs
- Appendix C Tabulated Results from Questionnaire

ES. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Scenic Qualities Inventory Report was prepared by Public Affairs Management as part of the Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan. The goal of the Management Plan is to identify the “intrinsic qualities” of the Highway 1 corridor through Big Sur and to develop management strategies to ensure their protection. The information in this report will aid the development of management strategies and will provide a baseline against which the effectiveness of those strategies will be evaluated.

This scenic qualities inventory provides a detailed description of the scenic elements within the corridor. Scenic quality as defined by the National Scenic Byways Program¹ is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and man-made elements of the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. As is the case for other intrinsic qualities, scenic quality is determined by how the existence of resources along the byway contributes to an overall visual quality. The scenic quality of a byway is based on the existence of significant scenic views from the road and the absence of features that detract from the overall impact of the road. Overall, the Big Sur Coast Highway corridor exhibits a very high level of visual quality, as would be expected given its dramatic setting and its Scenic Byway designation as an All American Road.

This report also identifies visual elements that contribute to, or detract from, the scenic qualities of the corridor. These elements were identified through field surveys, a Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop and a Viewer Response Questionnaire. Elements contributing to scenic quality include expansive ocean views, rural character, native plants, forested areas, and rock outcroppings, to name just a few. Elements detracting from visual quality include commercial and residential development, power poles, roadside signage, non-native plants, fencing, lighting and landslides/slope repairs.

The report concludes that while the corridor contains some of the most dramatic scenery in the world, there are real threats to its scenic quality. Of primary concern is the increasing pressure to develop new residential and commercial buildings and the associated infrastructure required to support this development (power poles, signs, lighting, etc.). Another significant threat to scenic quality is the maintenance necessary to keep Highway 1 open during periods of severe weather.

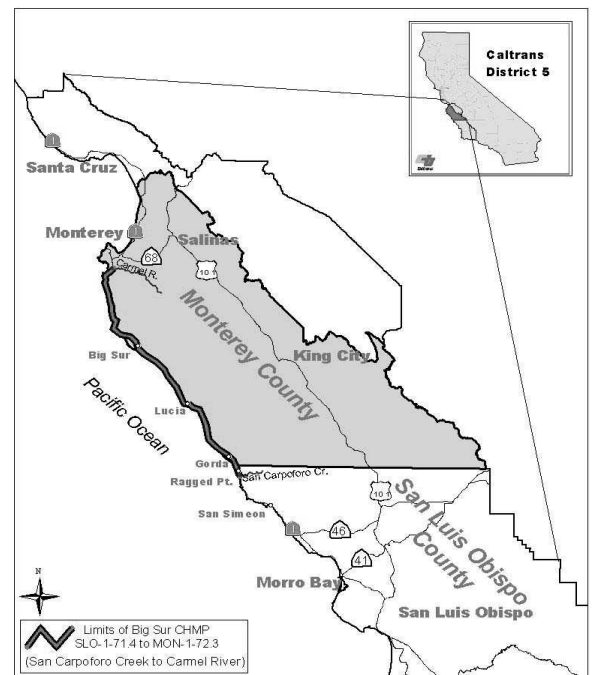


Figure 1. Map of Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan Area

¹ The guidelines for this program are outlined at <http://www.byways.org>, and on the website for the Federal Highway Administration.

Chapter I of this Report describes the purpose of the Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan. The methodology used to inventory the scenic qualities within the corridor is described in Chapter II. Chapter III contains the scenic quality inventory along with a table summarizing the report findings. To conduct the inventory, the corridor was described using four standard categories: viewsheds, landscape units, view locations, and intrinsic features. These elements were evaluated in terms of their intactness, vividness and unity, and the dominance of Highway 1 within that particular location or context. In all, a total of 8 viewsheds, 35 landscape units, 20 view locations, and 21 intrinsic features were identified and evaluated. The inventory includes a description of each area and a summary rating of its scenic quality. A Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop and Viewer Response Questionnaire were utilized to confirm the information and findings presented in Chapter III. Chapter IV provides a summary of the Viewer Response Questionnaire that was distributed at a public meeting held on March 1, 2001 in Big Sur and distributed along the corridor in May 2001.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 PLAN PURPOSE

The Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP) is designed to establish coordinated management of the Highway 1 corridor along this widely treasured coastline. The primary goal is to preserve, protect and restore the area's unique qualities while ensuring the continued safe and efficient operation of the highway. The planning area is located along a portion of the historic Carmel-San Simeon Highway from San Carpoforo Creek in San Luis Obispo County to the Carmel River in Monterey County, also known as Highway 1 along the Big Sur Coast.

The CHMP also fulfills the objectives of the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways program to update the Corridor Management Plan originally prepared in support of its All-American Road designation in 1996.

I.2 BACKGROUND

The ongoing natural processes that shape the unforgettable landscape in Big Sur also create the greatest challenges for maintaining a reliable highway. Perched on the steep western slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains, which face the brunt of Pacific storms, the highway requires intensive maintenance and is in an almost continuous state of repair.

Landslides and washouts of variable severity result in frequent road closures; complex repairs to restore the highway can cause further delays and extend over long periods of time. With detours nearly non-existent, Highway 1 is the lifeline to several well-established communities. It also provides access to eight state parks and a large unit of the Los Padres National Forest. Considering the highway itself is a major travel destination, closures and extended delays reverberate through the coastal communities between San Luis Obispo and Carmel, whose economies are heavily dependent on recreational travel.

With rapid response to restore highway travel after an event, coordination among many parties with an interest or regulatory authority can become tense under what sometimes appears to be competing interests. Working under these circumstances can result in sometimes awkward solutions, delays and increased costs.

Meanwhile, the accumulated consequences from frequent repairs and related highway improvements have been seen as threatening the unique qualities and most sensitive resources found on this coast. Concerns about visual impacts from large cut and fill

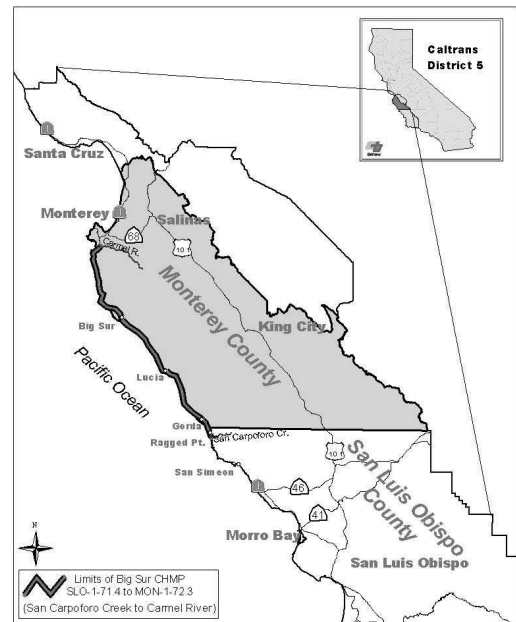


Figure 1. Map of Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan Area

slopes, spread of invasive plants, impacts to marine and upland coastal habitats from repairs (including disposal of material) and proliferation of standard highway designs have all contributed to a sense by the community that the corridor is being gradually degraded.

After a particularly harsh winter in 1998, a focused effort by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to develop a coordinated management plan was initiated in the form of the Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan.

Fundamental to a corridor management plan is an inventory of intrinsic qualities, the unique and irreplaceable features that define the essence of the corridor. The inventory of these qualities provides the foundation on which management strategies will be designed to preserve, protect and restore.

Intrinsic qualities are categorized into six types:

- Archaeological
- Cultural
- Historic
- Natural
- Scenic
- Recreational

This report describes the scenic resources along the corridor that contribute to and detract from the overall scenic quality of the area.

The inventory for the Big Sur Coast has been developed to a greater level of detail than what would normally be expected for a Corridor Management Plan. For this corridor, all resource information has been assembled into a Geographic Information System (GIS)¹ database to help meet the larger objectives of the CHMP to facilitate regulatory decision-making on highway-related activities.

I.3 OVERVIEW OF THE SCENIC ELEMENTS OF THE BIG SUR COAST AND COAST HIGHWAY

The Coast Highway (US Highway 1) passes through Big Sur on its way from San Simeon to Carmel along the central California coast. The Big Sur coast is one of the most scenic places in the United States and the world. This dramatic meeting of land and sea has been written about, photographed, and visited by people seeking to experience its natural beauty ever since the first settlers explored the area. The Coast Highway, considered by many to be one of the wonders of Big Sur, was designated the first Scenic Highway in California because it provides a driving experience unsurpassed in natural beauty and scenic variety. The Coast Highway provides access for people from all over the world to experience the scenic wonders of Big Sur. The Coast Highway is also a “lifeline” for the businesses and people who now live along the coast.

¹ A Geographic Information System (GIS) provides the ability to store and view geographic information spatially; it is a computer-based application from which the mapping for this report was produced.

The history of Big Sur is important from a scenic quality perspective because much of this history is evident in the scenic qualities, features and views that are experienced while traveling the Coast Highway.

This stretch of the California coast is extremely rugged and was not settled until a little more than a century ago. The area was originally called El Sur Grande, or the Big South, and was virtually unexplored and unmapped until the mid-1800s. In the late 1800s and turn of the century, Big Sur actually sustained a larger population than it does today. This boom was associated with a thriving redwood lumbering industry. Road access was extremely limited, and steamers transported people and goods into and out of the area. Navigation was very dangerous given the rocky coastline and heavy surf. In 1889 the Point Sur lighthouse was constructed, providing much needed help to the sailors who navigated the coast. In 1937, the current Coast Highway was completed after 18 years of construction. Electricity finally reached the Big Sur coast in the 1950s, however, even to this day, it does not extend the entire length of the coast or into more remote inland areas.

Natural and unspoiled mountains and rocky coastline are the dominant scenic qualities along the Coast Highway. Agriculture is also a prominent scenic quality and is represented by cattle grazing, ranch fencing, and old homesteads. The roadway itself also provides prominent visual resources such as the historic rock walls that line portions of the roadway and the beautiful arched bridges at Rocky Creek and Bixby Landing.

There are also features that detract from the scenic quality of the Big Sur coast. Most of these features are related to modern development and the pressures of urbanization such as power lines, trophy homes, and roadside signage. Naturally occurring phenomena such as landslides and washouts also detract from the scenic quality by creating scars on the hillsides and disrupting the flow of traffic along the Coast Highway.

I.4 PURPOSE OF THE SCENIC QUALITY ANALYSIS

As part of the Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan this scenic qualities analysis was prepared to:

- ❑ Provide a comprehensive inventory of the scenic qualities (i.e. viewsheds, landscape units, view locations, and intrinsic scenic features) along the CHMP corridor
- ❑ Identify the existing features and elements that contribute to the scenic quality of the Coast Highway for protection throughout the corridor.
- ❑ Identify existing features and elements that detract from the scenic quality of the Coast Highway for possible correction.
- ❑ Evaluate the CHMP strategies and the potential effects on scenic quality.
- ❑ Identify needs and opportunities for additional view points.

The scenic qualities analysis conducted for the CHMP is similar to a typical visual impact assessments for transportation projects in that it provides an inventory of the visual and scenic elements within the project corridor based on guidelines provided in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) approach to visual assessment of highway projects (FHWA, no date). However, the scenic qualities analysis also incorporates evaluation criteria and methods developed as part of the Scenic Byways program. The Scenic Byways program focuses on identification of the intrinsic features of a byway that make it special or unique. As a result, this scenic qualities analysis identifies intrinsic scenic features along the corridor. This analysis also utilized information from a Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop and a viewer response questionnaire. The Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop provided a forum for discussion and identification of scenic qualities in the context of the Scenic Byways program. Whereas the viewer responses questionnaire was intended as a tool to validate the inventory of scenic elements and visual quality ratings which are based on typical visual impact assessment methodology.

This scenic qualities analysis is not intended to satisfy environmental review requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for specific construction, maintenance and repair projects along the Coast Highway. Such future projects will require supplemental project-specific scenic evaluations, using this document as their starting point.

Chapter II provides a detailed description of the methodology used to develop the scenic quality information contained in this report. Chapter III provides a description and the visual quality ratings for each Viewshed, Landscape Unit, View Location and Intrinsic Scenic Feature identified within the project study limits. A table summarizing the information is provided at the end of Chapter III. Chapter IV provides a summary of the Viewer Response Questionnaire that was distributed at the March 1, 2001 Public Meeting in Big Sur and along the corridor during the month of May 2001. Chapter V, which will be prepared subsequently, will provide an analysis of the management strategies and programs being considered for the Coast Highway Management Plan and their potential effect on the scenic quality resources identified in Chapter III.

II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and criteria used in assessing the existing scenic qualities of the CHMP project corridor.

The study methodology was developed using guidelines provided in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) approach to visual assessment of highway projects (FHWA, no date). The existing scenic qualities of the project corridor are described in terms of the following components:

- actual visual resources - described in terms of viewsheds, landscape units, viewpoints and intrinsic features.
- the characteristics of the resources - described in terms of their visual quality on a scale of high, medium and low.
- viewer sensitivity – measured through exercises at a Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop and a Viewer Response Questionnaire.

The scenic qualities of the corridor were mapped, described and comparatively evaluated to provide a comprehensive inventory of the existing visual resources of the corridor.

II.1 VISUAL RESOURCE DEFINITIONS

II.1.1 Regional Landscape Character

The first step in identifying visual character is to define the regional landscape in which the project study area is located. This definition establishes a frame of reference when evaluating and comparing the visual quality of specific segments or features within the corridor. Regional landscapes constitute broad areas defined by physical and ecological factors and are characterized by specific combinations of four components: landform (or topography), water, vegetation, and man-made development.

II.1.2 Viewsheds

A viewshed is generally defined as the visual envelope that a person can see from a specific point within which specific visual elements (e.g. trees, rock outcroppings, etc.) can be discerned. As a result, viewsheds are generally quite large, encompass many different visual elements and landscapes, and are often defined by topographic features. For the Coast Highway, this approach to defining viewsheds was slightly modified in response to the extremely long corridor being inventoried. Viewsheds were delineated with an emphasis on areas that possessed common visual elements, vegetation or topographic features, as well as the visual envelope from various vantage points. This approach resulted in viewsheds of varying size and length that generally stretch several miles along the coast. Using this method, viewshed boundaries represent major changes in visual character as one progresses south to north along the Coast Highway.

II.1.3 Landscape Units

Landscape units are distinct segments of the project corridor within viewsheds that have a consistent or cohesive visual character primarily based on vegetation, topographic and man-made elements. Their boundaries are often marked by distinct changes in visual character or spatial experience, such as a river crossing or a change in land use pattern. The visual character of some units is strongly influenced by specific landscape features, such as residences or other man-made structures, or distinctive landforms or vegetation. Landscape units along the Coast Highway vary greatly in width depending on the types of vegetation, man-made features, topography and other features. In general, the landscape units along the Coast Highway encompass the scenic elements within 50 to 100 feet on either side of the roadway. As a result, the description of each landscape unit captures the typical viewing experience while travelling along the Coast Highway.

II.1.4 View Locations

View Locations are defined as locations along the Coast Highway that provide a chance for travelers and residents to stop and experience the unique scenic qualities of the Central California Coast. Because these are locations where motorists can stop, they provide a much different viewing experience than the view experienced from a car while driving along the Coast Highway. These view locations provide the opportunity to see more elements and features for a much longer period of time, making the viewing experience more sensitive to change. The view experience from a car while traveling along the Coast Highway is more accurately portrayed in the description of the various landscape units.

Most view locations are large pullouts, or designated Vista Points, located along the Coast Highway where roadway users can safely stop. View locations may also include recreation areas such as public beaches or trail heads that provide a unique and significant viewing opportunity. Because this stretch of the Coast Highway contains numerous view locations, only significant major view locations have been mapped, described and evaluated. Significant major view locations are defined as pullouts, vista points, or recreational areas with unique and/or long-range views of the coast. Significant major view locations are also defined as areas where at least four or more cars could pull off the roadway at one time. These criteria translate to areas where travelers can pull off and on the roadway in a safe manner and enjoy the view(s) with a sense of relative safety. Minor view locations, which include smaller pullouts and recreational vantage points, were mapped but were not described or evaluated for this study.

II.1.5 Intrinsic Scenic Features

Intrinsic scenic features are defined as physical features located along the Coast Highway that contribute to or define the visual experience and character of this portion of the Central California Coast. Intrinsic scenic features are often natural such as rock outcroppings, unique landforms, or significant trees or wooded areas. Intrinsic scenic features may also include man-made features that are unique or otherwise help to define the aesthetic character of the corridor. Examples of man-made intrinsic scenic features along the Coast Highway include the Point Sur lighthouse and the Bixby Bridge. Each intrinsic scenic feature identified for this analysis has been mapped, described and evaluated.

II.2 SCENIC QUALITY EVALUATION

Each viewshed, landscape unit, view location and intrinsic scenic feature was described and evaluated in terms of its scenic quality. The evaluation focuses on factors that describe the level of visual relationship between the elements within the landscape or view. The factors evaluated include visual quality, visual dominance, defining characteristics and viewer exposure.

II.2.1 Visual Quality

Visual quality is a subjective issue that requires careful consideration. To address the subjective nature of this evaluation, and consistent with Federal Highway Administration guidelines, visual quality was divided into three sub-criteria: vividness, intactness, and unity. For each of these criteria a rating of high, medium or low was assigned. These criteria and the ratings are defined as follows:

- **Vividness** is the visual power or memorability of the landscape or feature. Ratings of high indicate a very powerful and memorable experience such as the dramatic drops and rocky cliffs of Hurricane Point or the Point Sur Lighthouse. Medium to low vividness ratings reflect less powerful or memorable experiences such as the forested Big Sur valley, which is quite beautiful but far less powerful and dramatic when compared to other parts of the Coast Highway.
- **Intactness** is the visual integrity of the natural and/or man-made landscape. A key indicator of intactness is freedom from encroaching elements when viewing a landscape or feature. Ratings of high intactness reflect a consistent visual experience such as the stretch south of Cape San Martin where there are few man-made intrusions other than the Coast Highway. Examples of medium to low intactness would be the stretches near Esalen where man-made elements and landscape plantings interrupt the natural landscape.
- **Unity** is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape and/or feature. When considering unity of a landscape or feature, all natural and man-made features found within the normal view range are considered. In altered landscapes, the degree of unity frequently attests to the careful design or fit of individual components in the landscape. An example is the way man-made elements such as the Bixby Bridge combine with natural features to provide a coherent visage unique to the Coast Highway.¹ A rating of medium to low would indicate that elements of the landscape are not coherent, such as the stretch at the northern end of the corridor where man-made features such as the Rocky Point Inn, homes, and driveways create a sharp contrast with natural landscape features and dramatic views.

II.2.2 Visual Dominance

Another key factor in evaluating scenic quality is visual dominance. This factor involves the evaluation of the visibility of a specific feature within the view. For this study, the focus of the visual dominance evaluation is the visibility of Highway 1 within the view. Visual dominance is rated on a scale of inevident to dominant as described below:

¹ Although unity and intactness are often thought of as being similar, they are distinct criteria. For example, a stretch of road could be rated as having medium to low intactness because of manmade features intruding on an otherwise pristine natural setting (e.g. the Bixby Bridge stretch). Under unity, however, the design of the manmade feature can be taken into consideration. Thus, the same area could be given a rating of high unity because the contrast of features and the design of the man-made element(s) provide a unique and harmonious aesthetic.

- **Inevident**—Visible but generally not noticeable.
- **Subordinate**—Noticeable, but attracts less attention than other components of the setting.
- **Co-dominant**—Project attracts attention equally with other components of the setting.
- **Dominant**—Project dominates the view and attracts more attention than other components of the setting.

II.2.3 Image Types

Image types refer to unique images that contribute to the overall aesthetic. Image types were broken down into three general categories 1) topography – examples include rock outcroppings, cliffs or cut slopes; 2) vegetation – examples include redwood trees, cypress trees, or sage scrub; and 3) structures – examples include bridges (and other roadway appurtenances), homes, barns, signage, restaurants, etc. Image types are used primarily to help describe the features of a landscape unit or key elements within a viewshed.

II.2.4 Viewer Exposure

Viewer exposure addresses the sensitivity of the viewer to change. The criteria that affect sensitivity to change include the viewer angle, position and distance. Viewer exposure is most often used when evaluating specific viewpoints such as vista points and lookouts. Viewing angle is an important factor in evaluating viewer exposure. In general, a 45-degree viewing angle is preferable because it allows the viewer to see the depth, architectural features and length of the feature being viewed. Highly acute viewing angles are less preferable because architectural details and the depth of the feature being viewed are often reduced at sharp viewing angles. Perpendicular angles are also less preferable than a 45-degree viewing angle because the depth of the feature is often lost, while architectural details are more visible. For this inventory, the view angle was defined as the angle to the Coast Highway within the primary viewing direction from the viewpoint. For example, the focus of some viewpoints is rocks or other features out in the ocean. In these cases, Highway 1 would be at a highly acute angle. Other views may primarily be up or down the coastline within which Highway 1 may be at a 45-degree angle or perpendicular.

Viewing distance affects the degree of visibility of landscape features. Close viewpoints, typically within 0 to 0.5 kilometers (0 to 0.3 miles), permit perception of landscape detail and small-scale features. An intermediate viewpoint, typically from 0.5 to 5.0 kilometers (0.3 to 3.0 miles), permits the viewer to perceive the relationship of landscape features, although detailed perception is considerably reduced. Distant viewpoints, typically beyond 5.0 kilometers (3.0 miles) from the viewer, allow the perception of only large-scale features (e.g., ridges, water, and urban settlements), with little detail and considerable loss of color contrast.

Viewer position was also noted on the inventory forms. Viewer position refers to the location of the viewer relative to the Coast Highway and can be either above, below or at the same level. Viewer position is an important consideration in that positions located above the road will tend to see more of the road and therefore be more sensitive to changes such as widening of the road,

new railing, and slope repairs. Viewer positions below the roadway would see less of the road surface and therefore be less sensitive to changes such as widening of the road, new railing, and slope repairs.

II.2.5 Defining Features

Defining features are the key visual elements that comprise the view. These features can be natural, such as steep topography and minimal vegetation or man-made structures such as bridges, homes, hotels or restaurants. Defining features are categorized as features that either contribute or detract from the overall visual character of the view. For example, the viewshed surrounding Hurricane Point is characterized by steep cliffs, rugged mountain terrain and low-lying vegetation providing long-range dramatic views of the coast. There are very few elements in this stretch of Highway 1 that detract from this overall aesthetic. Other viewsheds such as the Big Sur Valley are characterized by forested landscapes with frequent signs of development including residences, stores, campgrounds, restaurants and resorts allowing primarily short-range views with periodic glimpses of the surrounding hills. In this stretch of Highway 1, commercial signage and parking lots do not provide a consistent architectural aesthetic. The randomness of location of these man-made features detracts from the forested setting.

II.2.6 Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop

In September 2000 a Scenic Conservation Planning Workshop (Scenic Workshop) was held in Big Sur by the National Scenic Byways Resource Center. This workshop provided a forum for stakeholders including community members and agency representatives to discuss the scenic features and elements along the Coast Highway, as well as current and potential threats to the scenic qualities of the area. The workshop included several exercises that provided valuable input in developing the present inventory of scenic qualities. These exercises involved identification of the major "corridor sections"² along the Coast Highway and current and potential threats to the scenic resources within each corridor section. The current and potential threats included: invasive non-native plants; storm damage repairs; signs; utilities; development; degradation of cultural resources; and highway design, structures and features.

Another exercise involved participants', taking photographs of scenic elements and features along the Big Sur Coast. These photographs were placed on a large topographic map according to their location along the Coast. The photographs were of features that participants felt contributed to the scenic quality, such as the historic fountains and rock walls found along the Coast Highway, views of agricultural uses and rural characteristics such as multi-colored mailboxes, and panoramic views of the coastline. Other pictures were of features and elements that participants believed detracted from the scenic quality, such as roadside signage, trophy homes, power poles, non-native plants, and storm damage repair efforts.

The input received at the Scenic Workshop helped guide the scenic qualities inventory data collection efforts and provided valuable input for preparing the descriptions of the viewsheds, landscape units, view locations and intrinsic scenic features identified in this report.

² "Corridor section" was a term used by the workshop participants to describe distinct areas along the Coast Highway within the CHMP corridor. While no specific definition of a corridor section was developed at the Scenic Workshop, these areas roughly translate to Viewsheds as defined in this inventory report. The viewsheds identified in this inventory report (See Chapter III) are compared to each of the corridor sections identified by the Scenic Workshop participants.

A summary of the Scenic Workshop along with sample photographs depicting both contributing and detracting features is contained in Appendix B.

II.2.7 Viewer Response Questionnaire

To assist in the evaluation of scenic quality and validate the baseline scenic qualities inventoried in this report, a viewer response questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire provided a way to survey a broad cross-section of users of the Coast Highway about scenic elements of importance to them and for them to rate specific examples along the highway, in terms of scenic quality. The questionnaire validated the range of contributing and detracting features inventoried along the highway and the scenic quality ratings given to specific segments of the highway. A copy of the questionnaire along with tabulated results is contained in Appendix C.

Respondents were asked a wide range of questions to identify:

- Scenic features, views and viewpoints of most importance along the Highway
- Features that detract from the scenic quality of the area
- Features that contribute to the scenic quality of the area

Respondents were also asked to evaluate several photographs taken along the Coast Highway in terms of overall visual quality and the elements within each photograph that contributed to and/or detracted from the overall visual quality.

The questionnaires were distributed over two weekends in May 2001 and at a public meeting held in Big Sur on March 1, 2001. A total of 71 questionnaires were filled out and returned to Caltrans. A more detailed summary and evaluation of the responses received is contained at the end of Chapter III.

II.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection was performed through a series of field surveys conducted in July and August 2000. The purpose of the surveys was to map existing scenic resources (viewshed, landscape units, viewpoints, and intrinsic features) along the Coast Highway and evaluate their scenic quality.

II.3.1 Mapping

For this study, the project corridor was divided into eight viewsheds based on the criteria described in Section 1.1.2. United States Geologic Survey (USGS) topographic quad sheets at a scale of 1:24,000, which equals 1"=2000', were used to map viewshed boundaries, which are primarily delineated by topographic features (e.g. ridgelines, points). Aerial photographs at a scale of 1" = 200 feet were used to map the limits of landscape units and the location of viewpoints and intrinsic scenic features. The field mapping on USGS quads and aerial photographs was then transferred to a GIS database where it was linked with scenic quality evaluation data and photographs of each visual resource.

II.3.2 Photography

For each scenic resource, photographic records were taken to assist in the scenic quality evaluation, and these were used to depict key visual elements and representative scenic features. A digital camera, primarily utilizing a 50-mm focal length, was used to generally depict the view cone of the human eye. Where broader scenic views occurred, a wider angle lens was used to capture the breadth of the view or feature(s). Photo points were chosen based on their ability to depict the typical visual character of the resource.

II.3.3 Inventory Forms

To facilitate the scenic quality evaluation in the field, scenic resource inventory forms were developed for each resource (a sample of the inventory form is provided in Appendix A). The forms include geographic reference information as well as several factors that relate to evaluation of the overall scenic quality of the resource(s). The information gathered for each viewshed, landscape unit, viewpoint and intrinsic scenic feature is described in more detail below.

Inventory Forms - Viewsheds

For each viewshed, information was collected on the scenic resource inventory form regarding key scenic qualities and geographic references. This information included the overall visual quality of the viewshed in terms of vividness, intactness and unity (see descriptions and rating system above), as well as information about the viewshed's defining features, and the visual dominance of the Coast Highway within the viewshed.

Inventory Forms – Landscape Units

As with the viewsheds, geographic reference information was collected for each landscape unit. In addition, the viewshed encompassing the landscape unit was documented. Similar to each viewshed, the visual quality of each landscape unit was evaluated and rated in terms of vividness, intactness and unity. For landscape units, the evaluation of scenic quality was limited to the areas immediately adjacent to the Coast Highway (approximately 50 – 100 feet on either side). The image types within each landscape unit were also documented. In essence, these evaluations most represent what travelers see, in terms of visual quality, as they progress north or south along the roadway.

As with viewsheds, the visual dominance of the Coast Highway within the landscape unit was evaluated based on the criteria and definitions described above in section 1.2.2. In general, at the landscape unit level, the roadway is relatively dominant within the landscape, however, in some areas the roadway is less dominant. In these areas the overall scenic quality tends to be higher because the roadway detracts less from the natural setting and views.

Inventory Forms - Viewpoints

For each viewpoint, geographic reference information was collected and the viewshed and landscape unit encompassing the viewpoint were documented. For each viewpoint, the primary viewer type as well as viewer exposure information (angle, distance and position) were noted. The viewer type in most cases is a roadway user travelling along Coast Highway; however, in some locations the viewer group may be recreationists or residents. These distinctions were

noted on the inventory forms and are important when considering viewer sensitivity to any changes to the view.

As with viewpoints and landscape units the visual quality of the view with regard to vividness, intactness and unity was evaluated for each viewpoint. In addition, the defining features within the view were also noted and categorized according to those that contribute to the overall quality of the view and those that detract from the view.

As with landscape units, the visual dominance of the roadway was evaluated. In the context of a viewpoint, visual dominance of Highway 1 was evaluated in terms of the overall view, or primary focus of the view from each particular viewpoint. For example, the primary view from a viewpoint may not include Highway 1 because the view is primarily of the ocean, rock outcroppings or other features. In this case, the visual dominance of Highway 1 in the view would be inevident.

Inventory Forms – Intrinsic Scenic Features

The inventory methods for each intrinsic scenic feature were very similar to the approach for landscape units. Information about the visual quality of the feature in terms of vividness, intactness and unity was collected. The ratings of visual quality consider the feature in the context of its immediate surroundings. The defining characteristics of the feature were noted and categorized into topographic, vegetative and structural/man-made. Finally, the visual dominance of the feature was noted.

III. EXISTING SCENIC QUALITIES

SOUTHERN GATEWAY: VIEWSHED 1



Viewshed 1 – Southern Gateway (View looking northwest with the mouth of San Carpoforo Creek in the foreground) (SLO-1-71.5/73.0)

The Southern Gateway is the transition between the low coastal bluffs north of San Simeon and the rugged Big Sur Coast. San Carpoforo Creek and Ragged Point make up the southern boundary of this viewshed. The road climbs slowly and steadily from the flat, open coastal plain around San Carpoforo Creek and the beach at the mouth of the creek, into the steep coastal hills where it is lined by cypress and Monterey pines. The Ragged Point Inn is located towards the northern end of this viewshed and marks both the start of the Big Sur Coast for travelers heading north and the end of the Big Sur Coast for travelers heading south. The location of this viewshed is shown on Map 1 in Appendix A.

Many features contribute to this scenic viewshed, such as the long stretch of white, sandy beach at the mouth of San Carpoforo Creek and the rock formations in the ocean just off of Ragged Point. The road is subordinate to the natural landscape and the road's topography ranges from level to steep and mountainous. There is a great variety of vegetation that changes with the topography and where human development has occurred. Low coastal sage scrub is dominant around San Carpoforo Creek, while planted features such as Cypress and Monterey pine forests dominate the landscape in the more mountainous areas. While these trees may add to the vividness and unity of the landscape, they may actually detract from the intactness because they are not native to this area.

The vividness, intactness and unity of the viewshed are considered medium because of the mixture of natural and man-made features and variety of terrain. Detractors from the scenic quality of this viewshed are primarily man-made features such as residences, buildings, fences, driveways, road cuts on distant hillsides and mailboxes and signage

immediately along the road. Other detracting features include areas of landslide repair, specifically to the north of San Carpoforo Creek Bridge.

This viewshed was generally identified by participants at the Scenic Workshop as the "Ragged Point corridor section." The boundaries identified by Workshop participants begin at San Carpoforo Creek and end at the Monterey County line, which includes all of Viewshed 1 and a portion of Viewshed 2 as defined in this report. The narrow, winding road, historical agricultural uses and the beautiful mountain views were noted as significant scenic attributes within this viewshed. Detractors included invasive plant species, such as pampas grass and fennel, and road repairs and preventative measures due to constant landslide activity.

This scenic viewshed includes two landscape units, one view location and one intrinsic feature. The visual quality ratings for this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

A. San Carpoforo Creek: Landscape Unit 1.1

Landscape Unit 1.1 - San Carpoforo Creek (View looking northeast from Highway 1 just south of San Carpoforo Creek) (SLO-1-71.5/72.1)

This landscape unit encompasses the flat floodplain of San Carpoforo Creek, which runs out of the Santa Lucia Mountains to the east. The creek creates a long expanse of white, sandy beach where it empties into the Pacific Ocean. Just to the north of San Carpoforo Creek the road begins to gain elevation and winds through the rugged, steep hills and mountains of the Big Sur coast. This transition marks the northern boundary of this landscape unit. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 1 in Appendix A.

The vegetation in this landscape unit is predominately coastal scrub with intermittent cypress trees on the hillsides along the road. There are some agricultural uses in the low-lying areas around San Carpoforo Creek. A homestead, barn and corrals (the Williams Ranch) are associated with the agricultural use. While this homestead is visually coherent with the large expanse of coastal plain and open space, there are many other intrusions upon the natural landscape that are not as coherent. These detractors include newer houses, driveways, fences, mailboxes and signage. Other disruptions in the natural landscape include the San Carpoforo Creek Bridge and a slide repair north of San Carpoforo Creek. This mixture of man-made and natural features detracts from the landscape unit's vividness, unity and intactness, resulting in an overall visual quality rating of medium.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

B. Ragged Point Inn: Landscape Unit 1.2

Landscape Unit 1. 2 – Ragged Point Inn (View looking southwest) (SLO-1-72.1/73.0)

The Ragged Point Landscape Unit is located immediately north of San Carpoforo Creek. After winding up the steep hillsides of the previous landscape unit, the road levels off on a high plateau with steep hillsides on either side. Much of the road is enclosed by mountains and trees, which limit ocean views and result in a vividness rating of low overall. Views open up again on the north side of the landscape unit, by the Ragged Point Inn. The prominent features at the northern end of this landscape unit are the large rocks and many smaller rock formations in the ocean just off the point. Elevation is at approximately 91.4 meters (300 feet). The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 1 in Appendix A.

Cypress and Monterey pine forests dominate the landscape immediately adjacent to the roadway at both the north and south ends of this landscape unit. In the middle, there is a small section of coastal scrub vegetation, which affords broader views of the coast and a more natural aesthetic than other parts of this landscape unit. Near the Ragged Point Inn, forested ravines and creeks that empty into the ocean begin to appear.

There are many man-made features within this landscape unit including houses, driveways, fences, mailboxes and signage that detract from the visual quality and result in medium intactness and unity ratings. A major disruption in the natural landscape is the Ragged Point Inn, which includes a hotel, restaurant and gas station. The Inn is a rather large development on the southbound side of the road and is a very popular tourist stop. Even though the Ragged Point Inn is considered by many to detract from the natural beauty of the landscape, it is a well-known landmark and a respite for travelers and as such is considered an intrinsic feature to this part of the coast (see description below).

Within this landscape unit the surveyors identified one view location and one intrinsic feature. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Low
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Ragged Point:View Location 1.2.VL1



View Location 1.2.VL.1 – Ragged Point (View looking southwest toward Ragged Point) (SLO-1-72.5)

There are few locations in this viewshed where it is safe and convenient to pull off the roadway. The Ragged Point View Location, however, is one of those locations. This view location is an informal pull-off and parking area with sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, the beach at the mouth of San Carpoforo Creek, and the rocks of Ragged Point, which give it a high vividness rating. There are few improvements at this view location other than some tree removal that appears to have been done to improve the vista. The location of this feature is shown on Map 1 in Appendix A.

A couple of features detract from the view at this location and result in medium intactness and unity ratings. Dead and dying eucalyptus trees and the stumps that remain from prior tree removal detract from the immediate foreground of this view location. There are also signs of the intensity of human use of this location such as litter, soil compaction and little ground vegetation.

From this view location the highway is inevident because immediately adjacent to the view location the roadway is shielded from view by trees and the roadway is not visible in the distant view.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Inevident

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate/distant
Position	Above

2. Ragged Point Inn: Intrinsic Feature 1.2.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 1.2.IF1 - Ragged Point Inn (SLO-1-72.9)

Ragged Point Inn sits atop a flat coastal bluff at the northern end of this viewshed. A steep forested ravine and creek form the northern boundary of the Inn. The Inn is known as a tourist destination that marks both the start of the Big Sur Coast for the travelers heading north and the end of the Big Sur Coast for travelers heading south. While many people consider the Inn a detractor to the natural landscape, the Inn provides a unique opportunity for travelers to safely pull off the road, get something to eat and get out of their cars to enjoy the local scenery. The location of this feature is shown on Map 1 in Appendix A.

The Inn consists of six one- and two- story wooden buildings, a hotel, restaurant, parking lot and gas station. The grounds are landscaped with native and non-native plants and there is a large expanse of lawn between the restaurant and Inn.

Because of the Inn's location, size and architecture it received a high vividness rating. These same features result in low unity with the surrounding landscape. Intactness is considered medium because the Inn utilizes natural building materials and colors in an attempt to blend with the surrounding landscape.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Low
Visual Dominance of Feature	Dominant

GORDA COAST : VIEWSHED 2

Viewshed 2 – Gorda Coast



(SLO-1-73.0/MON-1-11.4)

The section of roadway between the Ragged Point Inn and Cape San Martin typifies the southern Big Sur coast. The road winds amongst forested canyons lined with eucalyptus and Monterey pine trees and then abruptly gains elevation into more mountainous terrain. The roadway's higher elevation offers sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, while the lower elevations offer more intimate views. Areas of barren hillsides dot the landscape where landslides have taken place as a result of the powerful winter storms that affect this part of the coast. The signs of past road washouts and subsequent repair are obvious throughout this viewshed. The location of this viewshed is shown on Maps 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix A.

The contributing features that define this viewshed are the uniqueness of the winding road and the dramatic variations in its elevation. In some of the canyons and ravines, waterfalls can be seen emptying over the rocky cliffs into the shallow pools below. The higher elevations offer panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and of the rocky coastline.

The features that detract from the scenic quality of this viewshed are mostly man-made, such as signage, metal guardrails, and barbed wire fences. Pampas grass, an invasive non-native vegetative species, has taken over large hillside areas, especially where landslides have occurred. However, these elements do not substantially detract from the viewshed's overall visual quality, which is considered high.

This viewshed was identified by participants at the Scenic Workshop as the "Gorda Coast" corridor section. The boundaries of this viewshed as defined by Workshop participants begin at the Monterey County line and end at Willow Creek. This area includes most of Viewshed 1 and a small portion of Viewshed 2 as defined in this report. The narrow, winding road, and the beautiful mountain views were noted as significant intrinsic features within this corridor section. Detractors included invasive plant species, such as pampas grass and fennel, and evidence of road repairs and preventative measures due to constant landslide activity.

This scenic viewshed includes three distinct landscape units, three view locations and three intrinsic features. The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

A. Salmon Creek: Landscape Unit 2.1

Landscape Unit 2.1 –Salmon Creek (View looking southwest) (SLO-1-73.0/MON-1-7.0)

This landscape unit is considered high in scenic quality because it typifies the southern Big Sur coast and is unique in its landscapes and views. The roadway is characterized by abrupt elevation gains and losses and moves in and out of steep ravines as it winds along the coast. The higher elevations provide sweeping ocean views. This basic aesthetic occurs for more than seven miles resulting in a high vividness rating. As a result, this is the longest landscape unit in the inventory. This landscape unit was named after Salmon Creek Falls (located at MON-1-2.2), the breathtaking waterfall that attracts tourists and hikers alike, especially during the spring when run-off is at its peak. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix A.

The vegetation changes with elevation. Coastal sage scrub and chaparral are dominant along the road and hillsides in many areas, while the eucalyptus and Monterey pine ecosystems become more dominant in the ravine areas.

Although the scenic quality is high, some features detract from the scenic quality of this landscape unit. These include residences, barbed wire fences and metal guardrails. In many of the roadside pullouts, large boulders have been placed around the edges of the pullouts to mark the edge of the view location. However these elements do not substantially detract from the overall high unity and intactness of this landscape unit.

There are two view locations and two intrinsic features within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Salmon Creek: View Location 2.1. VL1



View Location 2.1VL1 –Salmon Creek (View looking southeast) (MON-1-2.2)

The Salmon Creek View Location is an informal dirt pullout on the northbound (eastern) side of the Coast Highway, located approximately 90 meters (300 feet) south of the Salmon Creek Ranger Station. This pullout is located along a large hairpin turn. It offers a view of Salmon Creek Falls and the lush streamside vegetation within the small river canyon along Salmon Creek. The location of this feature is shown on Maps 1 in Appendix A.

There are a number of hiking trails and campsites within the Salmon Creek area. As a result this pullout is used not only by motorists, but also for hikers.

The visual quality of this viewpoint is high because there are no visible houses or signs of residences in the area, except for the Salmon Creek Ranger Station. There are very few detractors to this view location, but the ones that do exist include metal guardrails and signage for trails and roadways. Salmon Creek Falls can be seen from this view location.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Acute
Distance	Intermediate/near
Position	Below

2. South Coast: View Location 2.1.VL2



View Location 2.1.VL2 –South Coast (View looking north) (MON-1-4.65)

The South Coast View Location is a fairly large pullout on the southbound (western) side of the road. There is a small hill that separates the pullout from the highway that makes it feel somewhat private and protected. This view location offers a 180-degree view of the Pacific Ocean, and the kelp beds below provide a highly vivid setting. The location of this feature is shown on Map 2 in Appendix A.

The features that detract from the views at this location are those that relate to past roadway work such as rubble, berms and debris from old landslides. There are also large boulders that have been placed to define the edge of the cliff. These elements around the view location detract from the overall visual quality and are the reasons for the medium intactness and unity ratings.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Distant
Position	Above

3. Salmon Creek Waterfall: Intrinsic Feature: 2.1.IF1



Intrinsic Feature 2.1IF1 –Salmon Creek Waterfall (MON-1-2.2)

Salmon Creek Waterfall is one of the most scenic waterfalls along the Big Sur Coast. The waterfall attracts tourists and hikers alike, especially during the spring when run-off is at its peak. Salmon Creek meanders through lush streamside vegetation and seasonal wildflowers. The location of this feature is shown on Map 1 in Appendix A.

The waterfall spills over a steep, rocky cliff, which is typical of the surrounding topography. The bottom of the ravine is lush with vegetation that begins to thin as the elevation climbs. Willow, California buckeye, Bay laurel and coastal sage scrub are found within the waterfall area. The natural setting and dramatic waterfall give this intrinsic feature its high vividness rating.

The only obvious structure or manmade characteristic in the vicinity is the metal guardrail along the roadside. The lack of detracting features and elements provides a highly intact and unified aesthetic and contributes to this feature's high visual quality overall.

The visual quality ratings of this Intrinsic Feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

4. Water Fountain: Intrinsic Feature: 2.1.IF2

Intrinsic Feature 2.1IF2 –Water Fountain (MON-1-3.8)

There are several small parks and water fountains located along this stretch of the Coast Highway. These areas are often not maintained and show signs of deterioration and neglect. This particular fountain is on the northbound (eastern) side of the Coast Highway and is a small area with a rock wall surrounding a small waterfall. Just next to the waterfall are a pipe and spigot that feed fresh, cold, drinking water from an underground spring. While this particular water fountain is quite pretty, it provides a more intimate setting and medium vividness. The location of this feature is shown on Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix A.

The topography is a steep hillside, surrounded by coastal sage scrub and non-native grasses. The only man-made features are the rock wall, foundation, and the metal piping. Although no signage or information is present in the area to explain its history or importance, the scenic quality of the waterfall and architectural treatment of the fountain provide a historical aesthetic to this portion of the Coast Highway. The fountain is an example of a man-made feature that blends with the surrounding environment. The rock material and design of the fountain, while clearly man-made, are not major detractors from the overall visual quality and result in a setting that exhibits medium intactness and unity.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

B. Alder Peak: Landscape Unit 2.2

Landscape Unit 2.2 –Alder Peak (View looking north) (MON-1-7.0/9.9)

This landscape unit is steep and mountainous. Mountains rise abruptly to the east and cliffs drop dramatically to the west, allowing for striking ocean views that give this landscape unit a high vividness rating. The roadway varies in elevation from 30 meters (100 feet) to over 91 meters (300 feet) in some areas. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 2 and 3 in Appendix A.

Many landslides and road washouts have occurred within this landscape unit over the years and pampas grass grows abundantly on the hillsides. The abundance of this non-native plant detracts from the intactness and unity of the landscape unit's elements. Road repairs and crib walls are also common visual features that detract from the landscape unit's unity and intactness.

Structures in the area include driveways, gates, stone guardrails, powerpoles, and road signage. Road cuts are visible on the distant hillsides. Debris from past landslides has been used to create berms along the more immediate roadway edge.

No significant major view locations or intrinsic features were identified along this stretch of highway except for small dirt turnouts. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

C. Gorda: Landscape Unit 2.3

Landscape Unit 2.3 –Gorda (View looking north) (MON-1-9.9/11.4)

As the road passes through the Gorda area, the terrain becomes less mountainous. The highway opens up to wider spaces and rolling hills to the east, which in the springtime are a sea of greenery. To the west, steep cliffs drop to the ocean, offering sweeping 180-degree views up and down the coast. These sweeping views provide a highly vivid setting. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

Coastal sage scrub is the dominant vegetation in this area, however, the road winds in and out of eucalyptus groves and Monterey pine forests. Pampas grass lines the roadway and the hillsides in some areas. Most of the developed areas along this stretch have been landscaped with native and non-native plants.

The small roadside town of Gorda is on the northbound (eastern) side of the highway. This unique little town is a stop for travelers and locals alike. Directly north is a Caltrans maintenance station, which includes approximately eight buildings. It is enclosed with landscaping in the front making it less noticeable to travelers along the Coast Highway. These man-made structures detract from the landscape unit's intactness and unity.

One view location and one intrinsic feature were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Cape San Martin Overlook: View Location 2.3.VL1



View Location 2.3.VL1 –Cape San Martin Overlook (View looking north) (MON-1-11.35)

Cape San Martin, San Martin Rock and the rugged coast and bay are the primary scenic resources to the northwest from this view location. However, this view location provides vistas of many miles in both directions making this a highly vivid view location. The location of this feature is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

This view location consists of a large gravel turnout with Monterey pines skirting the edges. The trees give this turnout a feeling of uniqueness and protection, however, they also obstruct some of the view when looking to the south. The trees do not create any obstruction of the views to the north, which is the primary direction of viewing. Metal guardrails are the only other detractors at this view location. The absence of detracting features results in a view and setting exhibiting a high level of intactness and unity.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate/distant
Position	Above

1. Gorda: Intrinsic Feature 2.3.IF1



Intrinsic Feature 2.3.IF1 –Gorda (View looking south) (MON-1-10.2)

Gorda is a small roadside town consisting of a lodge, restaurant, store, gas station and parking lot. Many travelers driving the Big Sur coast stop here for amenities. Gorda is considered an intrinsic scenic feature because of its architecture and location. Gorda is an isolated town with long stretches of sparsely populated areas to both the north and south. As such, Gorda provides a unique and distinct scenic change from the more natural aesthetic character, which occurs for miles in either direction. The location of this feature is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

The visual quality of this intrinsic feature overall is medium. Gorda presents a unique, but not dramatic, visual image along the coast, resulting in a medium vividness rating. The architecture of the town is quaint and tends to fit with the broader coastal aesthetic, however, commercial signage and parking areas detract from the landscape resulting in medium intactness and unity ratings.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

LUCIA COAST: VIEWSHED 3

Viewshed 3 – Lucia Coast (MON-1-11.4/24.7)

This approximately 12-mile-long viewshed is characterized primarily by the flat coastal bluffs around Pacific Valley. The viewshed also contains a number of pretty beaches, coves and campsites. In good weather, the hills to the east and above Pacific Valley, which are visible for many miles, are a popular hang-gliding area. This broad variety of views and landscapes is what gives this viewshed its high visual quality rating overall. The location of this viewshed is shown on Maps 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Appendix A.

Many of the important scenic resources in this viewshed are located within parks operated by the U.S. Forest Service, such as the Kirk Creek Campground at the foot of scenic Nacimiento-Ferguson Road and Limekiln State Park near Lopez Point. Near the northern end of this viewshed is the town of Lucia with its restaurant, store and lantern-lit cabins.

The features that most detract from the scenic quality of this viewshed are the pampas grass (which has overrun many locations), buildings, campgrounds and power poles that run along this stretch of highway.

Participants at the Scenic Workshop identified two distinct corridor sections within Viewshed 3. The southern half of this viewshed was identified as “Pacific Valley” corridor section. The boundaries of this corridor section begin at Willow Creek and end at Wild Cattle Creek. Participants commented that there was reasonably good vegetation management in this area and very little development. Detractors included invasive plant species, such as pampas grass, and road repairs due to constant landslide activity.

The northern half of this viewshed was identified by Workshop participants as the “Lucia Coast” corridor section. The boundaries of this area begin at Wild Cattle Creek and end at Lucia. Participants commented that within this area there are good bridges and little development other than the town of Lucia. Detractors included signage and structures near to the town, invasive plant species, and road repairs due to constant landslide activity.

This scenic viewshed includes nine landscape units, two view locations and five intrinsic features. The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

A. Cape San Martin: Landscape Unit 3.1

Landscape Unit 3.1 - Cape San Martin (View looking south) (MON-1-11.4/12.1)

The scenic quality of this landscape unit is dominated by landslides and road washouts. In many areas, although well traveled, the road appears to be continually under repair. The views to the west are dramatic, but the hills to the east are largely barren, with only pampas grass growing on the scarred hillsides. Drops and gains in elevation are common to this section of roadway. Coastal sage scrub grows up high in areas free of landslides. The dramatic views of the ocean and scarred hillsides create a highly memorable and vivid landscape. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

In addition to the landslides and road repairs, rubble and berms have been placed along the western side of the road through much of this landscape unit. This detracts from the natural elements of the landscape and combined with the scarred hillsides, results in a landscape with medium intactness and unity.

There is one view location along this stretch of highway and one intrinsic feature within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Willow Creek Picnic Ground: View Location 3.1.VL1



View Location 3.1.VL1 –Willow Creek Picnic Ground (View looking northwest) (MON-1-11.8)

Willow Creek Picnic Ground is a nice stopping point for travelers along the Coast Highway to take a break, look at the view, and watch the occasional surfer. There is a paved turnout along the road, and a parking lot and picnic area below. The location of this view is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

The visual quality of this view location is high because it affords close-up and intermediate views of small coves and inlets, kelp beds, rocky coastline, and the Pacific Ocean. Visual elements such as signage and large boulders around the parking area are minor detractors from the overall visual quality of this view location.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Near/intermediate/distant
Position	Above

2. Cape San Martin: Intrinsic Feature 3.1.IF1



Intrinsic Feature 3.1.IF1 – Cape San Martin (View looking southwest toward Cape San Martin) (MON-1-11.5)

Cape San Martin, easily seen from the Coast Highway, was identified as an intrinsic feature because of its unique and dramatic visual qualities. A large rock sits just off the tip of the Cape, forming a dramatic aesthetic. Several smaller rock formations lie to the west of the Cape. There is also a small cove at the south end of the beach in this area. All of these features combine to create a vivid natural setting unique to the Big Sur coast. There are, however, many places along the roadside where rubble has been piled from old landslides and non-native pampas grass dominates the vegetation, detracting from the landscape's intactness and unity. The location of this feature is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of Feature	Dominant

B. Plaskett Creek: Landscape Unit 3.2

Landscape Unit 3.2 –Plaskett Creek (View looking northwest) (MON-1-12.1/13.2)

Steep, rocky hillsides characterize this landscape unit. There are areas where small landslides have scarred the mountainsides but not as dramatically as in the Cape San Martin Landscape Unit. Steep cliffs drop to the ocean, providing striking views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below, which gives this landscape unit its unique character and high visual quality overall. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

Although the Coast Highway passes through occasional eucalyptus groves and Monterey pine forests, coastal scrub is the dominant vegetation along this section of highway. Pampas grass lines the roadway and the hillsides in some areas.

Some of the elements that detract from the visual quality of this landscape unit are the many dirt roads that have been constructed in the hills to the east and driveways that connect to the Coast Highway. There are also intermittent residences visible along the sides of the roadway.

No significant view locations were identified in this landscape unit, however one intrinsic feature was identified. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. San Martin Park: Intrinsic Feature 3.2.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 3.2.IF1 –San Martin Park (MON-1-12.25)

San Martin Park is a small, semi-maintained, roadside park. There are stone walls and stairs making up the periphery. A large boulder and trickling waterfall are the primary scenic qualities of this park. This site is considered an intrinsic scenic feature for the Coast Highway because the large boulder, rock wall and stairs provide a historic architectural aesthetic. The location of this feature is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

The area surrounding the park is steep and mountainous, with landslides to either side. Coastal scrub and pampas grass are the dominant types of vegetation.

Given the lack of maintenance and immediate proximity to the roadway, the overall visual quality of this site is considered medium to low. The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Feature	Co-dominant

C. Pacific Valley: Landscape Unit 3.3

Landscape Unit 3.3 –Pacific Valley (View looking south) (MON-1-13.2/16.45)

The scenic character of this landscape unit is dominated by low coastal bluffs, cliffs and agricultural uses. Flat grassy plains expand seaward and drop off to the ocean approximately 23 meters (75 feet) below. On the northbound (eastern) side of the Coast Highway, there are rolling hills, and there are several opportunities for close-up views of the rocky coastline on the southbound (western) side. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 3 and 4 in Appendix A.

Low coastal scrub is dominant on the northbound (eastern) side of the highway, while grazing lands are dominant on the western side.

The overall visual quality of this landscape unit is medium because of the many man-made features and buildings along this stretch of road. The town of Pacific Valley, which was located in the middle of this landscape unit, was once a regular stop for travelers, however, it burned several years ago and now all that remains are some buildings and foundation remnants. Plaskett Creek campground and the paved parking lot for Sand Dollar Beach are other man-made features that are visible from the roadway. Pacific Valley School is located across the highway from the Plaskett Creek campground. The Pacific Valley Ranger Station is also located in the landscape unit. A unique man-made visual element in this landscape unit is the numerous v-shaped ladders that provide coastal access over barbed wire cattle fences in Pacific Valley. Many of these man-made features do not detract from the scenic quality of the landscape unit, but support the rural agricultural character of this area.

Visual elements that detract from the scenic quality of the landscape unit include power poles and signage common to this stretch of highway.

No view locations were identified in this landscape unit, however, one intrinsic feature was identified. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Dominant

1. Plaskett Creek Rock/Sand Dollar Beach: Intrinsic Feature 3.3.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 3.3.IF1 –Plaskett Creek Rock/Sand Dollar Beach (View looking southwest toward Plaskett Creek Rock in the ocean) (MON-1-14.6)

Sand Dollar Beach and Plaskett Creek Rock are considered intrinsic scenic features because they represent the classic scenic elements of the Big Sur coast. Sand Dollar Beach is a crescent shaped, long, white, sandy beach that is protected from the wind by the flat coastal bluffs above. Plaskett Creek Rock is a large round rock formation that sits just off of Sand Dollar Beach to the south. There are few signs of human presence to detract from the beauty of the natural environment and the dramatic meeting of land and ocean in this area. These beautiful but rugged and secluded scenic features typify the Big Sur aesthetic. The location of this feature is shown on Map 3 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

D. Wild Cattle Creek: Landscape Unit 3.4

Landscape Unit 3.4 –Wild Cattle Creek (View looking north) (MON-1-16.45/18.45)

This landscape unit is characterized by steep, rocky hillsides. The steep cliffs on the southbound (western) side of the roadway drop to the ocean revealing uninterrupted, striking views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below. Tall mountainsides dominate the northbound (eastern) side of the road. This dramatic topography is the primary feature, creating the high visual quality rating for this landscape unit overall. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 4 in Appendix A.

Vegetation within this landscape unit is primarily coastal scrub. Smaller amounts of pampas grass line the roadway and the hillsides in some areas along this section, to some extent detracting from the larger scenic qualities. Other elements that detract from the scenic quality of this landscape unit are road side signage and metal guardrails; road cuts in the distant hills are also common.

The Coast Highway is co-dominant in the landscape because of the lack of other man-made development, generally low lying vegetation and long viewing lengths both southward and northward along the coast.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified in this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

E. Kirk Creek: Landscape Unit 3.5

Landscape Unit 3.5 –Kirk Creek (View looking north) (MON-1-18.45/19.0)

This is a small landscape unit defined by two, forested river canyons (one at each end of the unit) and rolling hills. A bridge crosses each creek, which acts as an approximate starting and ending point for this landscape unit. The visual quality of this landscape unit is considered medium to high because of several man-made features that detract from the natural landscape. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 4 in Appendix A.

This stretch of highway is at a low elevation, of approximately 30 meters (100 feet) and close to the ocean. There are two Forest Service parks within this landscape unit with man-made facilities that detract somewhat from the natural scenic qualities. Both of the parks, Mill Creek and Kirk Creek, are located west of the Coast Highway and provide picnic areas and overnight camping. Metal guardrails, signage and road cuts also detract somewhat from the scenic quality. Nacimiento-Ferguson Road is visible on the hillside to the east.

The vegetation of this landscape unit is dominated by thick, coastal chaparral and sage scrub, which covers most of the hillsides. Monterey pine forests and riparian vegetation dominate the two river canyons.

There are one view location and no intrinsic features within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Mill Creek: View Location 3.5.VL1



View Location 3.5.VL1 –Mill Creek (View looking south) (MON-1-18.65)

This view location consists of a dirt pullout with Monterey pine trees growing along the edges. The Monterey pines give this view location a unique visual quality and sense of protection, however, the trees obstruct some of the view, especially in the southward direction and reduce the vividness of the view. The location of this view is shown on Map 4 in Appendix A.

This view location affords close-up and intermediate views of small coves and inlets, kelp beds, rocky coastline, and the Pacific Ocean. Visual elements such as road cuts, metal guardrails, and pampas grass detract from the intactness and unity of the view.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Near/intermediate
Position	Above

F. Los Padres: Landscape Unit 3.6

Landscape Unit 3.6 –Los Padres (View looking north) (MON-1-19.0/20.9)

The Los Padres Landscape Unit is characterized by steep cliffs on the southward (western) side, which drop to the rocky coastline and ocean below. These dramatic drops afford striking views of the Pacific Ocean and the shoreline. To the east, this landscape unit is bordered by tall mountains. Because of the dramatic views and little evidence of man-made development, the visual quality of this landscape unit is considered to be high. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 4 and 5 in Appendix A.

The vegetation of this landscape unit is dominated by coastal scrub with pampas grass lining the roadway and the hillsides in some areas.

The primary scenic detractors in this landscape unit are the metal guardrails and road cuts along the highway.

No significant view locations were identified in this landscape unit, however one intrinsic feature was identified. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Rockland Roadside Park: Intrinsic Feature 3.6.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 3.6.IF1 –Rockland Roadside Park (MON-1-20.4)

Rockland Roadside Park is another small roadside park along the Coast Highway. This park appears to be partially maintained. There are stone walls and stairs marking the periphery of the site. One stone wall frames a small waterfall that trickles off the mountain side. Even though this feature is on the northbound (eastern) side of the highway, there are nice views of the ocean and Rockland Landing to the west. The intimate nature of this feature results in medium vividness. However, the level of maintenance, man-made features, waterfall and views to the ocean across the highway all combine to create a very nice aesthetic that fits together well resulting in high intactness and unity ratings. As with the other small parks along the Coast Highway, this park is considered an intrinsic scenic feature because it provides a historical aesthetic to this portion of the road. The location of this feature is shown on Maps 4 and 5 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Subordinate

G. Rain Rocks: Landscape Unit 3.7

Landscape Unit 3.7 –Rain Rocks (View looking north) (MON-1-20.9/22.1)

This landscape unit is known for the large landslides and road washouts that have occurred in this area. Chain link netting has been installed over much of the cliff to prevent rocks and debris from falling onto the highway. In many areas, although well traveled, the road is still under repair. The views to the west are dramatic, of the ocean and rocky beaches, but the hills to the east are barren with only pampas grass growing on the scarred hillsides. Coastal sage scrub grows up high in areas free from landslides. Rubble and berms have been placed along much of the southbound roadside. The dramatic views combined with the scarred hillsides and extensive rockfall protection create a strikingly vivid aesthetic. These same features, however, are in great contrast to the natural setting, resulting in low intactness and unity. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 5 in Appendix A.

No view locations were identified in this landscape unit, however, one intrinsic feature was. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Low
Unity	Low
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Limekiln State Park/ Rockland Landing: Intrinsic Feature 3.7.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 3.7.IF1 – Limekiln State Park/Rockland Landing (View looking north) (MON-1-21.0)

Limekiln State Park and Rockland Landing (which is now abandoned) is located where the Coast Highway spans across the outlet of Limekiln Creek. Limekiln State Park encompasses the forested river canyon of Limekiln Creek and is now a US Forest Service Campground. Redwood trees thrive in this area and there is a small, sandy beach and cove created by the creek. The area surrounding the park is steep and mountainous. Coastal scrub and pampas grass are the dominant types of vegetation. The location of this feature is shown on Map 5 in Appendix A.

Limekiln State Park/Rockland Landing is identified as an intrinsic scenic feature because of the variety of its visual elements, which range from redwoods and steep ravines to sandy beach and rocky coves. This feature is a well-known landmark for locals and is a popular camping area. Nonetheless, the presence of man-made structures and improvements at the park detracts somewhat from the natural scenic qualities of the area.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

H. Lucia: Landscape Unit 3.8

Landscape Unit 3.8 – Lucia (View looking south) (MON-1-22.1/23.4)

This landscape unit is characterized by rolling hills and open terrain with steep cliffs and drops to the Pacific Ocean in some locations. There are also locations in this landscape unit where views from the roadway are very limited by vegetation and topography. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 5 in Appendix A.

Many different types of vegetation prevail along this stretch. Coastal sage scrub and chaparral grow in the more open exposed areas. Willow and other riparian vegetation grows in the creek areas. Redwood trees and Monterey pine grow in protected pockets. Many types of landscape plants and trees grow around the developed areas.

The small roadside town of Lucia is on the southbound (western) side of the Coast Highway. This town is a stop for travelers and locals alike. Lucia has a restaurant and lantern-lit cabins. High on a hill just south of Lucia, marked by a black cross, is the Benedictine New Camaldoli Hermitage, a silent retreat.

The mix of scenic qualities described above - rolling hills, steep cliffs, restricted views, and the town of Lucia - combine to create an interesting and memorable scenic experience, which translates to medium to high vividness. Some of these same features, however, (primarily the town of Lucia and Hermitage) detract from the intactness and unity of the landscape.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

I. Lopez Point: Landscape Unit 3.9

Landscape Unit 3.9 –Lopez Point (View looking northwest) (M:PM23.4-M:PM24.7)

Steep, rocky hillsides describe this landscape unit with steep cliffs to the ocean and tall mountains to the east. This landscape unit includes broad views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below. Coastal scrub is the dominant vegetation along this section of highway. However, pampas grass and other intrusive non-native vegetation are prevalent along the southbound (western) edge of the roadway. Another feature of this landscape unit is the absence of residences and other man-made structures, although metal guardrails, dirt roads, and road cuts can be seen throughout this landscape unit. The dramatic drops to the ocean and broad views are the dominant features that contribute to the high visual quality of this landscape unit. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 5 and 6 in Appendix A.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

BIG CREEK COAST/CENTRAL BIG SUR COAST: VIEWSHED 4

Viewshed 4 –Big Creek Coast/Central Big Sur Coast (MON-1-24.7/44.3)

This viewshed covers some 32 kilometers (20 miles) and is the transitional viewshed between northern Big Sur and southern Big Sur. Heading northward, the terrain of the road varies. The landscape becomes less arid and more tree-lined. Sometimes there are sweeping ocean views with stone guardrails, other times the road becomes enclosed by towering redwood forests. The location of this viewshed is shown on Maps 6, 7, 8 and 9 in Appendix A.

Contributing features to this section of roadway are the uniqueness of the stone guardrails along the highway and the variations in elevation. Deeply forested stream canyons can be seen intermittently on the northbound eastern side of the road. The higher elevations offer 180-degree views of the Pacific Ocean and of the rocky coastline, which provide this viewshed's high vividness.

Detractors are mostly man-made, such as signage, power poles and road cuts. Berms and other landslide rubble often line the southbound (western) edge of the road. There are also various businesses and residences located immediately adjacent to the roadway in some locations.

The participants at the Scenic Workshop identified three separate corridor sections within this viewshed. The first area was described as the "Big Creek Coast corridor section" which runs from Lucia to Rat Creek (about one-third of Viewshed 4). Participants felt that this stretch of the coast was distinct because of the lack of signs (mainly roadway signs), power poles or development. The main elements that detract

from the scenic quality of this stretch are invasive plant species and road repairs due to constant landslide activity.

The second area identified by Workshop participants was called the “Esalen Coast” corridor section. This area is from Rat Creek to Julia Pfeiffer Burns and covers approximately the middle one-third of Viewshed 4. Participant’s felt this stretch was unique because it contained more signs of development, including power poles and fences. Participants also noted that in this stretch, planted trees have grown so thickly that they obstruct views in many areas. The main detractors to this stretch’s scenic qualities were identified as being pampas grass, other invasive plant species, rubble and berms along the roadside in some areas, and roadwork to repair storm damage and landslide activity.

The third area within this viewshed was identified by Workshop participants as the “Partington Coast” corridor section. This area begins at Julia Pfeiffer Burns and stretches to Deetjen’s Big Sur Inn, covering the last one-third of Viewshed 4. Participants felt that this stretch was somewhat different from the Esalen Coast area because there were additional detractors from the scenic quality. These detracting elements include signage, residential and commercial buildings, more invasive plant species, and roadwork to repair constant landslide activity.

The three areas identified by participants at the Scenic Workshop within Viewshed 4 are analyzed as individual Landscape Units in this inventory (described below).

This scenic viewshed includes three landscape units, five view locations and six intrinsic features. The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

A. Big Creek Coast: Landscape Unit 4.1

Landscape Unit 4.1 –Big Creek Coast (View looking north) (MON-1-24.7/32.7)

Big Creek Coast Landscape Unit is characterized by steep, rocky hillsides with steep cliffs dropping to the ocean and tall mountains to the east. This landscape unit includes extensive views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below, giving this landscape unit high vividness. It is very similar in character to Landscape Unit 3.9 - Lopez Point. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 6 and 7 in Appendix A.

Coastal scrub is the dominant vegetation along this section of highway, but pampas grass and other intrusive non-native vegetation have invaded the southbound (western) side of the roadway. While there are no structures or residences immediately visible from the roadway, roadside signage, metal guardrails, fences and road cuts can be seen throughout this landscape unit, reducing its intactness and unity.

Three view locations and three intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Big Creek Bridge: View Location 4.1.VL1



View Location 4.1.VL1 –Big Creek Bridge (MON-1-27.3)

This view location consists of a large, paved turnout with a curb and boulders lining the outer edge. Looking northward, there is a clear view of Big Creek Bridge and its characteristic arches. This view location also provides intermediate views of small coves and inlets, kelp beds, rocky coastline, and the Pacific Ocean. These elements create a highly vivid aesthetic. While these views of the ocean and coastline are spectacular, there are man-made features within the view, such as crib walls and road reinforcements. These are minor detractors and do not substantially affect intactness or unity of the visual elements within the view. The location of this feature is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal/perpendicular
Distance	Intermediate
Position	Above

2. Square Black Rock View Location: View Location 4.1.VL2

View Location 4.1.VL2 –Square Black Rock (M:PM28.6)

This view location consists of a large turnout with a view of the Square Black Rock. There are also intermediate views of small coves and inlets, kelp beds, rocky coastline, and the Pacific Ocean. The ocean and coastline views are unobstructed and highly vivid. Rubble from past landslides has been used to create berms around the edge of this view location. This creates a minor detraction from the visual quality since the berms are clearly man-made because of their shape and location. Since the berms are the only real detraction from the view, the intactness and unity of the visual elements is high. The location of this view is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate/distant
Position	Above

3. Lopez Point: View Location 4.1.VL3



View Location 4.1.VL3 –Lopez Point (View looking south) (MON-1-29.7)

This view location consists of a large gravel turnout on the southbound (western) side of the highway. This view location offers sweeping ocean views both north and south along the coast. There are intermediate views of small coves and inlets, kelp beds and rocky coastline. Square Black Rock can be seen in the distance to the south. Similar to the Square Black Rock View Location, rubble and berms made of landslide material have been placed around the edge of this view location and create a minor detracting from the visual quality. The Coast Highway is the most dominant man-made feature, as one looks south and north along the coast. However, these detracting are relatively minor given the scale and extent of the views from this location, resulting in high visual quality ratings. The location of this view is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate, Distant
Position	Above

4. Lopez Point Rock: Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF1



Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF1 –Lopez Point Rock (MON-1-25.1)

Along the rocky coast of Big Sur, certain rocks are more prominent than others. Lopez Point Rock is important because it marks Lopez Point. It is a noticeable feature among the many other smaller rocks out in the ocean. On a big ocean swell, waves can be seen crashing over the top of the rock. The rock is approximately 152 meters (500 yards) off the coast. The location of this feature is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

A unique aspect of this area, and the reason for its high visual quality ratings, is that no man-made structures, guardrails or road cuts are visible when viewing Lopez Point Rock.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Subordinate

5. Rigdon Drinking Fountain: Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF2

Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF2 –Rigdon Drinking Fountain (M-1-26.9)

Rigdon Fountain is another of the small and intimate park features located along the Coast Highway. This particular one is on the northbound (eastern) side of the highway and is a small area with a rock wall surrounding a small creek. The drinking fountain referenced in the name of this site appears to have been destroyed, however, the site presents an interesting historical visual quality although little interpretive information is provided. The location of this feature is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

The topography surrounding the site consists of steep hillsides, surrounded by coastal sage scrub, redwood trees and pampas grass. The only unnatural features are the rock wall and foundation of the fountain itself.

The visual quality ratings for this site reflect the lack of maintenance and that many of the original features appear to have been destroyed. The vividness of the site is low primarily because of the lack of maintenance and interpretive information that would help make this site more memorable to the viewer. Intactness and unity of the site is considered medium primarily because vegetation has overgrown much of the man-made features so the contrast between these elements is less striking.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Low
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

6. Big Creek Bridge: Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF3

Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF3 – Big Creek Bridge (View looking north from Highway 1) (MON-1-28.1)

Big Creek Bridge is one of three classic concrete, open spandrel arched bridges that are associated with the Big Sur coast. This concrete bridge features high, open arches. These concrete arched bridges typify the engineering achievements of the early part of this century and provide a unique historical architectural scenic quality. The bridge and its arches also create a vivid visual image against the natural beauty of the Big Sur coast. The bridge is surrounded by rugged landscape, which increases the vividness of the bridge within the visual setting. One drawback to this feature is that it can be viewed only when heading in the northbound direction. Southbound travelers are not afforded a view of the arches and bridge structure because of cliffs and bends in the highway that hide any views of the bridge. The location of this feature is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

Man-made structures are often considered a detraction from the natural environment because the materials used and shapes generally do not reflect the colors and lines found in nature. Sometimes, however, man-made structures become a symbol that is associated with a particular area or region. The Golden Gate Bridge is an example. A similar situation has occurred with the arch bridges of the central coast. These bridges, while in a traditional sense, do not exhibit high intactness or unity with their surroundings, have become associated with the Big Sur coast. As such they are considered intrinsic scenic features of this area.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

7. Square Black Rock: Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF4



Intrinsic Feature 4.1.IF4 –Square Black Rock (View looking south from Highway 1) (MON-1-28.6)

Square Black Rock is just as it sounds, square and black. This rock is a very prominent feature along the coast because of its size, unique shape and isolation in the waters just off the coast. The rock can also be seen for several miles when driving in the southbound direction. The location of this feature is shown on Map 6 in Appendix A.

The terrain along the highway in the vicinity of Square Black Rock is rolling hills with steep cliffs dropping to the ocean. Coastal scrub is the dominant vegetation.

Similar to Lopez Point Rock, the views of Square Black Rock have high scenic quality. The rock itself, set alone out in the ocean, creates a memorable and highly vivid image. The views of Square Black Rock include few man-made features or other elements that detract from the intactness and unity of the view.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

B. ESALEN COAST:LANDSCAPE UNIT 4.2

Landscape Unit 4.2 – Esalen Coast (View looking south) (MON-1-32.65/35.8)

The Esalen Coast Landscape Unit is defined by the steep mountainous region of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range, which then gives way to more gentle open, rolling foothills. There are many creeks and river valleys within this landscape unit and the driver begins to see the presence of more water and bigger creeks. This landscape unit is where the southern Big Sur coast, which is more arid and steeper, transitions to the northern Big Sur coast. Monterey pine, cypress and eucalyptus trees are prevalent within this landscape unit. Coastal scrub is still the dominant vegetation in the open areas. Pampas grass and other intrusive non-native vegetation are much in evidence along the roadway. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 7 and 8 in Appendix A.

Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park is located within this landscape unit. The State Park is known for its slender waterfall that drops into an almost circular turquoise-blue cove. This is the only waterfall in California that plunges directly into the Pacific. However, this lovely waterfall cannot be seen from the road.

Features that detract from the natural setting of this landscape unit are limited but include the South Coast Center, which is the only building visible along this stretch of highway, metal guardrails, a bridge, power poles and mail boxes. Rubble and berms created from landslide material also line the roadway in some sections.

The overall visual quality of this landscape unit is considered medium. While there are many beautiful features along this stretch of the highway, striking views of the ocean are

less prevalent and trees often conceal distant views. Periodic man-made features also disrupt the overall unity of this landscape unit.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

C. Grimes Point: Landscape Unit 4.3

Landscape Unit 4.3—Grimes Point (View looking north) (MON-1-35.8/42.9)

Grimes Point is characterized by steep, rocky hillsides and cliffs. West of the highway, the land drops dramatically to the ocean revealing uninterrupted, striking views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below. To the east mountainsides dominate the view. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 8 and 9 in Appendix A.

Coastal scrub is the dominant vegetation along this section of highway. Pampas grass and other intrusive non-native vegetation are much in evidence along portions of the roadway. There are some scattered pine and eucalyptus trees. The spring fed creeks empty out of canyons and ravines lined with redwood trees and into the sea.

The Coast Gallery is the most obvious structure along this section of roadway. Contributing man-made features in this landscape unit are the stone guardrails, which add a feeling of uniqueness to this section of highway.

The visual quality of this landscape unit is considered high. Because of the rugged terrain and exposed roadway, the views are memorable and highly vivid. Unity and intactness of the landscape are also high because of few detracting features along this stretch of the Coast Highway.

Three view locations were identified in this landscape unit, however, no intrinsic features were identified.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. McWay Overlook: View Location 4.3.VL1



View Location 4.3.VL1 –McWay Overlook (View looking south) (MON-1-36.9)

The McWay Overlook View Location consists of a paved turnout with an excellent view southward to Lopez Point. Small stone pillars and wooden beams create a fence line protecting viewers from the steep cliffs and rocky shore below. Large boulders have also been placed at the periphery of the view location on the roadway side of the stone pillars and wooden beams. The broad and generally unobstructed view to the south from this view location is highly vivid given the unobstructed distance of the view. Nonetheless, the view location exhibits medium intactness and unity due to the visual jumble created by the contrast between the large boulders and the stone pillars and wood railing. Roadside signage and trash also detract from the overall visual quality of this location. The location of this view is shown on Map 8 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate, Distant
Position	Above

2. Partington Cove:View Location 4.3.VL2



View Location 4.3.VL2 –Partington Cove (View looking west from Highway 1) (MON-1-37.8)

This view location consists of a small dirt pullout on the southbound (western) side of the highway. The view is not expansive, but more intimate. The view primarily consists of a small, lush ravine. There is a sense from the size of the pullout and amount of use that there is more to this area than is immediately apparent from the initial view. This view location includes access to a Forest Service fire road that drops down to Partington Cove, where ships used to moor in the protected anchorage. Knowing the history of the cove provides a historical background to the visual elements of the area, making them more memorable and vivid than on first impression. In addition, there are few elements in this area that detract from the intactness and unity of the landscape. The elements that detract include the dirt fire road and metal guardrails along highway. The location of this view is shown on Map 8 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Perpendicular
Distance	Intermediate

Position	Above
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3. Lafler Canyon: View Location 4.3.VL3:



View Location 4.3.VL3 –Lafler Canyon (View looking south) (MON-1-41.0)

Lafler Canyon View Location consists of a paved turnout on the southbound (western) side of the road with an excellent view southward to Lopez Point. This view location offers sweeping ocean vistas, which provide the high vividness of this view location. Large boulders have been placed at the edge of this view location, which detract from the intactness and unity of the broader views and landscape. Other detracting features in the area are metal guardrails along the highway and the highway itself. Cuts in the hillsides that were necessary to build the highway are visible in the intermediate range views from this location. The location of this view is shown on Map 9 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant
Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Acute
Distance	Distant
Position	Above

D. Ventana Inn: Landscape Unit 4.4

Landscape Unit 4.4 –Ventana Inn (View looking south) (MON-1-42.9/44.3)

The Ventana Inn Landscape Unit is characterized by the roadway's climb up to the top of the Big Sur Valley. On its way, the Coast Highway passes by Deetjen's Big Sur Inn, the Henry Miller Memorial Library (which carries an interesting collection of books by and about the author, who lived in Big Sur for many years in the 1950s) and Nepenthe, a restaurant, cafe and gift shop. The roadway winds in and out of forested areas, with few opportunities for long-distance views along the coast. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 9 in Appendix A.

Redwood trees, tan oak and Bay laurel line the roadway in many areas. Coastal scrub and chaparral become less apparent through this landscape unit. Funky, colorful, old mail boxes line the road in some areas. In other areas these old mail boxes have been replaced with consolidated metal mail boxes that detract from the rural character of the landscape unit.

The visual quality of this landscape unit is considered medium. The expansive and highly vivid views along the coast are more restricted in this landscape unit and there begin to be more signs of urban development.

No view locations and two intrinsic features were identified in this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Deetjen's Big Sur Inn: Intrinsic Feature 4.4.IF1



Intrinsic Feature 4.4.IF1 –Deetjen's Big Sur Inn (MON-1-43.1)

As the Coast Highway winds through mountainous terrain and in and out of redwood groves, it eventually comes to a few isolated signs of human development. One of these is located on the northbound (eastern) side of the Coast Highway: Deetjen's Big Sur Inn, which is one of the oldest places to stay in Big Sur and is a National Register Property. This rustic redwood lodge was built by a Norwegian immigrant in the 1930s. Deetjen's is considered an intrinsic scenic feature because of its rustic architecture, beautiful setting along a steep redwood-lined stream, and long history, which is evident in the building's look and character. These elements combine to create a memorable and highly vivid aesthetic. The combination of structures, driveways, closeness to highway and signage reduce the intactness and unity of this feature with the surrounding landscape. The location of this feature is shown on Map 9 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings for this feature are listed below.

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

2. Nepenthe: Intrinsic Feature 4.4.IF2



Intrinsic Feature 4.4.IF2 –Nepenthe (MON-1-43.8)

Nepenthe is a restaurant, cafe and gift shop built with huge walls of glass to take advantage of the spectacular view along the coast to the south. Nepenthe is built of huge boulders and sits on a hilltop, which was previously the site of a rustic cabin that Orson Welles bought for his wife Rita Hayworth in 1944. Nepenthe is considered an intrinsic scenic feature for both its architecture and the views from its restaurant and rooftop café. This is a very popular spot for tourists in the summer months to stop, shop and view some of the most spectacular scenery along this portion of the Big Sur Coast. The drawback to Nepenthe from a scenic quality perspective is that it can appear commercial and crowded, which detracts from the surrounding natural beauty. While the views from Nepenthe could be considered quite vivid, the views of the site from the highway generally exhibit medium visual quality. The combination of signage, driveways and parking areas detracts from the intactness and unity of this site with the surrounding landscape. The location of this feature is shown on Map 9 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

BIG SUR VALLEY: VIEWSHED 5

Viewshed 5 – Big Sur Valley (View looking north) (MON-1-44.3/54.7)

This viewshed encompasses the Big Sur River Valley. Just past Nepenthe, the Coast Highway drops into the forested Big Sur Valley and the coast is no longer visible. To the east is the Ventana Wilderness with its steep, rugged and rural terrain. Steep hiking trails can be seen switchbacking up almost vertical hillsides in this area. The Big Sur River meanders through this valley as it flows to the Pacific Ocean at Andrew Molera State Park at the northern end of the valley. As the Coast Highway travels north it transitions from the forested valley of the Big Sur River to a broad coastal plain covered with chaparral and grasses. Andrew Molera State Park is located in this area. This viewshed is dramatically different from other parts of the Coast Highway. There are more signs of human development and fewer distant views because of the tall trees and hills that line the roadway. Redwood trees, tan oak and bay laurel line the roadway in many areas. This redwood ecosystem becomes the dominant ecosystem in this viewshed. Coastal scrub and chaparral become less so. The location of this viewshed is shown on Maps 9, 10 and 11 in Appendix A.

Developments such as river resorts, lodges, bars, restaurants and stores appear sporadically throughout this viewshed. Signage and power poles are above ground. Neon lights from the businesses can be seen at night. Landscape plants and non-native species are apparent around the developed areas. At the end of this viewshed, past Andrew Molera State Park, is the decommissioned Point Sur Naval facility.

In this viewshed the landscape becomes more closed-in because of the dense forests that line the roadway, structures and steep hillsides. This change in the landscape, when compared to the areas to the south, increase the dominance of the highway within the

landscape. In addition, the importance of the highway for commerce and daily existence becomes more apparent through this area.

The participants at the Scenic Workshop identified two corridor sections within Viewshed 5. The first was identified as the "Big Sur Valley" corridor section, which stretches from Deetjen's Big Sur Inn to Andrew Molera State Park. This stretch covers approximately one-half of Viewshed 5. The unique attributes of this section include the close proximity of trees to the roadway and the rural character of the area. Participants also noted that this stretch of the coast has become very urbanized with neon signs at many of the businesses. Other detracting features identified by participants included power poles and invasive plant species (particularly Cape Ivy). In this report, the "Big Sur Valley" has been broken into two landscape units, Upper and Lower Big Sur Valley, which are described below.

The second area within this viewshed was identified as the "El Sur Ranch" corridor section. This stretch begins at Andrew Molera State Park and ends at the Little Sur River. This area covers the northernmost portion of Viewshed 5 and a small portion of Viewshed 6. Participants commented that power poles are quite obvious in this area and that the naval yard and naval base are detractors from the overall scenic quality of this area. Participants also noted that in some areas, invasive plant species such as iceplant are present. In this report, the El Sur Ranch is identified as a Landscape Unit within Viewshed 5.

Five landscape units make up this viewshed. One intrinsic feature was identified in this viewshed, but no view locations were identified. The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

A. Upper Big Sur Valley: Landscape Unit 5.1

Landscape Unit 5.1 –Upper Big Sur Valley (View looking north) (MON-1-44.3/46.6)

This Landscape Unit is characterized by the steep downgrade of the road, dense forest and steep hillsides that enclose the roadway. This is because the road is passing through the top of the Big Sur Valley as it heads down hill toward the main part of the valley. The mountainous Ventana Wilderness is visible to the northeast. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 9 and 10 in Appendix A.

Trees and hillsides mostly enclose the road. Thick redwood forests line the roadside. There are a number of structures along this landscape unit including the Ventana Inn and Post Ranch Inn, Big Sur Center with its stores, café and US post office, the Forest Service ranger station and visitor center for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and various driveways and mailboxes.

While this landscape unit has a high level of vividness due to the dramatic change from coastal views to dense redwood forests, there are a number of structures and other signs of human development that detract from the landscape unit's intactness. The development that has occurred presents a wide range of aesthetics from new light industrial uses such as the Big Sur Center, to upscale inns and rustic lodges. While individually, these developments may exhibit some attractive features, as a whole they detract from the overall unity of the landscape unit.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

B. Lower Big Sur Valley: Landscape Unit 5.2

Landscape Unit 5.2 –Lower Big Sur Valley (View looking south) (MON-1-46.6/49.4)

The Lower Big Sur Valley Landscape Unit is characterized by the redwood forests, riparian habitat and the businesses and services of the Big Sur Valley. This is the heart of Big Sur and where most of the lodging and services can be found along the entire Big Sur Coast. The Coast Highway flattens out in this area. The highway meanders along the Big Sur River and through the valley. The Coast Highway passes over the river several times. Andrew Molera State Park is located at the northern end of this landscape unit. Redwood forests and riparian habitat are the two most common ecosystems within this landscape unit and dominant the overall aesthetic. Oaks are also very prominent throughout the valley in areas away from the river's edge. Grasslands prevail towards the northern end and are used primarily for cattle grazing. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 10 in Appendix A.

Since this landscape unit includes most of the lodging and services on the Big Sur coast, there are many structures along the roadway. These include businesses such as the Big Sur Lodge, the Big Sur River Inn, the Village Pub, Big Sur Cabins and Campground, Ripplewood Resort and the Glen Oaks Motel. There are other indications of development as well, such as above-ground power poles, roadside and business signage, gas stations, parking lots, neon signs and fences. Some of the roadside businesses have attempted to incorporate colors, materials and designs that are more sensitive to the surrounding environment or rural character of the area, however, there are also examples to the contrary, such as neon signs advertising beverages, corporate logos at gas stations, and nighttime lighting. The level of development and lack of consistent and sensitive design along the roadside result in a medium visual quality of this landscape unit overall.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified in this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

C. Andrew Molera South: Landscape Unit 5.3

Landscape Unit 5.3 - Andrew Molera South (View looking north) (MON-1-49.4/50.9)

The Andrew Molera South Landscape Unit is characterized by the broad riparian valley at the north end of the Big Sur River. The Big Sur River begins to meander more broadly through this area as the valley floor opens up. The road is flatter but still in a river valley. In this area, redwood forests of the Big Sur Valley transition into a more riparian habitat of sycamores and willows. Oak trees are also prevalent in upland areas. Redwoods become limited to the steeper ravines and north slopes. Signs of man-made development also decline in this landscape unit, however, there are still some signs including roadside signage, power poles and fences. Since the roadway is still primarily located within the river valley, this landscape unit has medium vividness, however, because of the lack of man-made development, the unity and intactness of this landscape unit are considered high. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 10 and 11 in Appendix A.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

D. Andrew Molera North: Landscape Unit 5.4

Landscape Unit 5.4 –Andrew Molera North (View looking south) (MON-1-50.9/51.9)

The Andrew Molera North Landscape Unit is characterized by the steep walls of the Big Sur River Valley giving way to rolling hills and the low coastal plain. This is where the Big Sur River empties into the Pacific Ocean. Much of the land along this landscape unit is located within Andrew Molera State Park, although there are little signs of the park except for occasional roadside signage (all park facilities are located west of the Coast Highway predominately out of view). The vegetation in this landscape unit changes from the redwood and riparian habitat of the landscape units to the south, to a mix of oaks, eucalyptus, grasslands and chaparral. The area is clearly more arid because of the presence of chaparral and grasslands and lack of creeks and rivers. Occasional power lines, fences and roadside signage are the predominant features that detract from the overall natural aesthetic. Similar to the Andrew Molera South Landscape Unit, this landscape unit exhibits some pleasant natural views, however, they are not particularly memorable and therefore are considered to have medium vividness. The lack of man-made structures or other detracting features contributes to a high level of intactness and unity. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 11 in Appendix A.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

E. El Sur Ranch: Landscape Unit 5.5

Landscape Unit 5.5 –El Sur Ranch (View looking North) (MON-1-51.9/54.7)

The El Sur Ranch Landscape Unit is characterized by rolling grasslands and cattle ranching operations. The land is level along the southbound (western) side of the highway with rolling hills primarily covered with grasses to the east. Cattle and horses graze on both sides of the road. Fencing is prevalent, with a mix of fencing types. Some fences have been designed to emulate the picket-type fences that once graced much of the area, while other fencing types are more utilitarian, such as barbed wire or chain link. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 11 in Appendix A.

The Point Sur Naval facility is the most dominant development in the area. The low concrete structures and scattered cypress trees stand out against the flat grassland plain. When the surrounding grasslands are dried and brown in color, green chain link fencing around the facility is evident and out of character.

There are broad but distant views of the ocean from most locations in this landscape unit because of the lack of trees along the immediate roadside. Point Sur and the facilities atop the rock are quite visible and provide a dramatic northern backdrop to this landscape unit. The Big Sur River Valley provides the backdrop to the south. These elements combine to create a medium level of vividness overall. The cattle ranching and agriculture aesthetic is very strong in this landscape unit and provides a high level of intactness and unity.

No view locations were identified within this landscape unit, however, one intrinsic feature was identified.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Point Sur: Intrinsic Feature 5.5.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 5.5.IF1 –Point Sur (View from Highway 1 looking southwest) (MON-1-54.5)

Point Sur is a large, volcanic, dome-shaped rock outcropping connected to the mainland by a long stretch of white sandy beach. It is a prominent symbol of the Big Sur Coast. A 100-year-old lighthouse and various old, Victorian-style buildings sit on top of Point Sur. These structures actually add to the scenic qualities of this feature because of their historical significance. The light from the lighthouse is visible for many miles to warn sailors of the rugged coastline and dangerous conditions. The location of this feature is shown on Map 11 in Appendix A.

The abrupt form and scale of Point Sur, together with the structures atop, create a very memorable and highly vivid image. The structures and access road to the Point tend to reduce the intactness and unity of the landscape.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

POINT SUR COAST: VIEWSHED 6

Viewshed 6–Point Sur Coast (View looking southwest toward Point Sur) (MON-1-54.7/58.3)

This viewshed is characterized by the stark contrasts of the turquoise Pacific Ocean crashing upon the shores of long expanses of white, sandy beaches. Various rock formations, Point Sur, the rocks at the mouth of the Little Sur River and the Ventura Rocks, provide dramatic and rugged views. The focus of this viewshed is the dramatic meeting of land and sea. This is reinforced by the high mountains that form its eastern boundary and that culminate at the El Sur ridgeline. This viewshed is relatively free from human intrusion. The only detractors are power poles, fences and minor road cuts. This viewshed is probably the most dramatic, intact stretch of the Coast Highway with views and features that typify the Big Sur and Coast Highway experience. Due to all these factors, the visual quality of this viewshed is extremely high. The location of this viewshed is shown on Maps 11 and 12 in Appendix A.

This viewshed was identified by participants at the Scenic Workshop as the “Bixby Coast” corridor section, which begins at the Little Sur River and ends at Rocky Creek. This area includes most of Viewshed 6 and a small section of Viewshed 7. Viewshed 7, in this report, is called the Bixby Coast because it contains Bixby Landing and Bixby Bridge. Participants commented on the notable bridges and the lack of power poles along this stretch of the coast. Participants also noted that there are some houses in the area, and their lights are visible at night. Road cuts in the hillsides are visible in some areas along the highway.

This scenic viewshed consists of three landscape units, with one view location, however, no intrinsic features were identified. The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

A. Point Sur Approach: Landscape Unit 6.1

Landscape Unit 6.1–Point Sur Approach (View looking northwest toward Hurricane Point) (MON-1-54.7/55.7)

The Point Sur Approach Landscape Unit is characterized by extensive ocean views and sections of light-colored sand dunes. In some places the movement of the sand dunes is quite evident from sand crossing the roadway and accumulating in some locations. The hills to the east of the Coast Highway are steep and the road is at an elevation of approximately 61 meters (200 feet). Ice plant is growing in mass, probably planted to hold down the moving sand, and represents a new vegetative aesthetic for the traveler heading northbound. There are small groves of cypress trees with coastal scrub and chaparral the most abundant vegetative communities. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 11 and 12 in Appendix A.

Road repairs are obvious as crib walls have been constructed to strengthen the road from the moving land. Guardrails are solid for strength, and although low, can block views from most cars. The only other unnatural features along this stretch are roadside signage and fences.

Even though there are elements that detract from the overall visual quality of this landscape unit (i.e. crib walls, guardrails and signage), they create only minor detractions from the expansive views.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

B. Little Sur River: Landscape Unit 6.2

Landscape Unit 6.2—Little Sur River (View looking northwest) (MON-1-55.7/56.5)

The Little Sur River Landscape Unit is characterized by the low coastal plain, delta and beach associated with the Little Sur River. In this area the road drops down relatively close to the ocean. The Little Sur River flows out of a steep ravine to the east and onto a long white sandy beach into the ocean. Coastal scrub and chaparral are the dominant vegetation in this area. Structures such as the bridge across the Little Sur River, fences and a viaduct have been built to support the roadway. These are prominent features and detract somewhat from the striking natural beauty. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

The more intimate views provided within this landscape unit and signs of road cuts reduce the vividness of the views. The lack of structures and other detractions from the natural setting provide a relatively high level of intactness and unity.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Coast Highway	Co-dominant

C. Sierra Hill: Landscape Unit 6.3

Landscape Unit 6.3—Sierra Hill (View looking south from just north of Hurricane Point) (MON-1-56.5/58.3)

Steep hillsides describe this landscape unit. Steep cliffs drop from just off the southbound (western) side of the roadway, revealing uninterrupted views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below. Along the northbound (eastern) side of the road, tall mountains dominate. The elevation of the road is relatively high at approximately 91 meters (300 feet). The predominant vegetative types are coastal scrub and chaparral. While there are no structures that are evident from the roadway, power poles, fences, cuts into the hillside and guardrails along the highway detract from the natural setting. As with many of the landscape units along this northern segment of the highway, these features are relatively minor detractions from the broad and highly vivid views. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

One view location and no intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

1. Point Sur: View Location 6.3.VL1



View Location 6.3.VL1–Point Sur (View looking southwest from just north of Hurricane Point) (MON-1-58)

This view location consists of a dirt pull-off on the southbound (western) side of the road. It offers unobstructed views of the Pacific Ocean to the south including bays and kelp beds immediately off the shore. Point Sur is visible in the distance. There are very few signs of human development or other man-made features, except for cuts into the hillside along the highway. These features provide a minor detracting from this unobstructed view of Big Sur's natural beauty. The location of this view is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate/distant
Position	Above

BIXBY COAST: VIEWSHED 7

Viewshed 7– Bixby Coast (MON-1-58.3/67.9)

The Bixby Coast viewshed is similar to the viewshed immediately to the south and is characterized by its steep and mountainous features. The roadway travels high above the ocean. Coastal bluffs and cliffs line the roadway to the west. Unobstructed views of the beaches, coves and ocean abound throughout this viewshed. The arched bridges over Bixby Creek and Rocky Creek are located within this viewshed. Road cuts, guardrails, and power lines are the primary detractors from the overall scenic quality at the southern end of this viewshed. To the north, signs of development increase as more homes, driveways, utilities and signs become evident. Even with these detractors, the overall visual quality of this viewshed is high due to the broad unobstructed views of the rocky coastline and dramatic meetings of mountains and ocean that dominant the aesthetic of this viewshed. The location of this viewshed is shown on Maps 12, 13 and 14 in Appendix A.

The participants at the Scenic Workshop identified most of this area as the “Garrapata Coast” corridor section, which extends from Rocky Creek to Malpaso Creek. The southernmost end of this viewshed was included in the “Bixby Coast” corridor section as defined by workshop participants. Participants commented on the many houses in the area, and their lights that are visible at night. Participants also noted that power poles, fences and signage are more prominent in this area and detract from the overall scenic quality. Invasive plant species, such as iceplant and cape ivy are present and also detract from the scenic quality. Participants noted that this stretch of the highway has many pullouts and some “ugly culverts.”

This scenic viewshed includes six landscape units, five view locations and four intrinsic features.

The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

A. Bixby Landing: Landscape Unit 7.1

Landscape Unit 7.1—Bixby Landing (View looking north from Hurricane Point) (MON-1-58.3/59.6)

This landscape unit is characterized by steep hillsides, a small flat coastal plain and tall cliffs that drop dramatically to the sea. There are uninterrupted views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline throughout this landscape unit. Bixby Bridge crosses over Bixby Creek with one large, open spandrel arched span. This bridge is a well-known landmark associated with the Big Sur Coast, and pictures of the bridge are often used in promotional materials. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

Coastal scrub and frequent groves of pine and eucalyptus are the dominant vegetation types in this area. The ocean just off of this landscape unit is within the California Sea Otter Game Refuge. Signage, power poles and small road cuts are prevalent along the roadway.

The visual quality of this landscape unit is high overall, because of the memorable elements of the view (i.e. tall cliffs, Bixby Bridge, sweeping ocean views). Elements such as road cuts and storm damage repairs along the highway, a house above the Bixby Bridge and small roads cut into the hillsides, are quite visible and detract from the overall visual quality of the landscape.

One view location was identified within this landscape unit, and two intrinsic features were identified.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

1. Hurricane Point:View Location 7.1.VL1:

View Location Unit 7.1.VL1–Hurricane Point (View looking southwest from Bixby Landing) (MON-1-158.3)

The Hurricane Point View Location consists of a large paved and gravel pullout at the top of Hurricane Point. This view location is one of the most popular stopping points along the Coast Highway for tourists to take advantage of the view and take pictures of the expansive views up and down the coast. The roadway is also at one of its highest elevations at this view location, contributing to the memorable and highly vivid views. The location of this view is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

The pullout at the view location is large and can accommodate large recreational vehicles and busses. The area becomes very busy on clear sunny days when the pullout can become jammed with cars and traffic slows down on the highway because of the cars entering and exiting the roadway. The pullout is lined with large boulders beyond which the land slopes steeply to the ocean far below. The elements of the boulders and volume of cars detract from the intactness of the landscape in the immediate area. The views are unobstructed, exhibiting a high level of unity.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Acute
Distance	Near, Intermediate, Distant
Position	Above

Hurricane Point : Intrinsic Feature 7.1.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 7.1.IF1–Hurricane Point (View looking southwest from Bixby Landing) (MON-1-58.3)

Hurricane Point is a tall, rocky point that juts out into the sea. It offers some great views up and down the coastline. Hurricane Point is unique because it is one of the most westerly points along the coast, and the Coast Highway, at this location, is at one of its highest elevations. These two factors combine to provide unparalleled views both north and south along the coast. The Point also creates a natural break between two major viewsheds in the area. The location of this feature is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

There are no structures at Hurricane Point but the road cut for the highway in the point itself creates an unnatural topographic feature that is highly visible.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Dominant

3. Bixby Landing: Intrinsic Feature 7.1.IF2



Intrinsic Feature 7.1.IF2–Bixby Landing (View looking north from Hurricane Point) (MON-1-59.4)

Bixby Landing is a small, protected bay surrounded by a rocky coastline. Bixby Bridge, a large arch bridge that spans over Bixby Creek and the bay, is a well-known landmark and another example of early century engineering. Its high concrete arch provides a dramatic change from the natural surroundings and has become a symbol of the Central Coast. It is not considered a detractor from the surrounding scenic quality. Another factor contributing to this scenic feature's character is that the bridge was constructed in an area of very steep and mountainous terrain, with tall coastal bluffs that are located on both sides of the bridge. The bridge creates a memorable and highly vivid image, while at the same time, the concrete structure is quite distinct from the surrounding landscape, resulting in medium intactness. The location of this feature is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

B. Rocky Point: Landscape Unit 7.2

Landscape Unit 7.2–Rocky Point (View looking northwest) (MON-1-59.6/61.9)

In the Rocky Point Landscape Unit, the hillsides are steep and in some areas set back to the east. In some places the flat coastal plain continues on until the cliffs drop to the sea; in other places there are only steep cliffs. The elevation is low compared to the areas immediately to the south, approximately 200 feet. There are uninterrupted views of the Pacific Ocean, bluffs and kelp beds. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 12 and 13 in Appendix A.

Coastal scrub and frequent groves of pine and eucalyptus are the dominant vegetation types in this area. This area is within the California Sea Otter Game Refuge.

Rocky Creek Bridge, smaller but similar in design to Bixby Bridge, is a dominant structure within this landscape unit. There are scattered residences, signage, power poles, and small road cuts that are prevalent along the roadway.

There are no view locations and one intrinsic feature within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate/inevident

1. Rocky Creek Bridge: Intrinsic Feature 7.2.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 7.2.IF1—Rocky Creek Bridge (View looking south from Rocky Point) (MON-1-60.1)

Less than a mile to the north of Bixby Bridge is its smaller twin, Rocky Creek Bridge. From a scenic canyon below the bridge, a creek empties into the ocean. This bridge also spans over a small, protected bay. The location of this feature is shown on Map 12 in Appendix A.

The terrain is steep and mountainous with coastal bluffs on the west side of the road.

Low-lying coastal sage scrub and chaparral are the prominent vegetation types. In contrast to the setting around Bixby Bridge, there are several residences scattered throughout this area that detract from the overall intactness of this feature.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Low
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Dominant heading southbound/ Inevident heading northbound

C. Kasler Point: Landscape Unit 7.3

Landscape Unit 7.3–Kasler Point (View looking south) (MON-1-61.9/62.9)

In the Kasler Point Landscape Unit, hillsides are steep on the east side of the roadway. To the west the flat coastal plain continues on until the cliffs drop to the sea. There are uninterrupted views of the Pacific Ocean, bluffs and kelp beds in places within this landscape unit. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

Coastal scrub and frequent groves of cypress and eucalyptus are present in this landscape unit. The cypress trees are often planted around residences and other structures to screen them from view from the highway, but at the same time they create significant view obstruction. The areas just off the coast along this landscape unit are within the California Sea Otter Game Refuge.

The primary detracting features within this landscape unit are the increase in residences, roadside signage, and long lines of power poles along the northbound side of the road. Small road cuts providing access to residences in the hills are prevalent in the hillsides to the east.

The increase in development, tree planting and other detracting features combine to obstruct views and reduce the vividness of this landscape unit. These same features also reduce the intactness of the landscape and have little unity with the natural environment.

There are one view location and no intrinsic features within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Low
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Kasler Point: View Location 7.3.VL1



View Location 7.3.VL1–Kasler Point (View looking west from Highway 1 Vista Point) (MON-1-62.6)

Kasler Point is a small paved view location on the southbound (western) side of the road. This is marked as a “Vista Point” with a curb separating this pullout from the highway and a decorative chain fence outlining the perimeter of the turnout. The view from this location is not a dramatic sweeping vista of the coastline, but rather an intimate close range view of a small, rocky, inlet and kelp beds. The view location is unique for this reason and provides an “up close” view of the ocean and coastal environment. While the vividness of the view is not high, the intactness and unity of the elements within the view are. The location of this feature is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Inevident

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Near
Position	Above

D. Soberanes Point: Landscape Unit 7.4

Landscape Unit 7.4–Soberanes Point (View looking south) (MON-1-62.9/65.4)

The Soberanes Point Landscape Unit is characterized by the flat coastal plain to the west between the roadway and the ocean, and steep hillsides to the east. Dramatic cliffs can be seen dropping to the sea. Throughout this landscape unit there are uninterrupted views of the Pacific Ocean, bluffs and kelp beds. Low coastal scrub is the dominant vegetation type in this area. There are, however, views of man-made structures that detract from the overall visual quality including roadside signage, power poles and power lines, and visible road cuts in the hillsides to the east. Many homes are also located along this landscape unit. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

Two view locations were identified in this landscape unit, however, no intrinsic features were identified. The visual quality ratings of this Landscape Unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Garrapata Creek: View Location 7.4.VL1



View Location 7.4.VL1–Garrapata Creek (View looking northwest from Garrapata State Park trailhead) (MON-1-62.6)

The Garrapata Creek View Location consists of a long dirt turnout along the southbound (western) side of the road and provides parking for hiking access to Garrapata Creek as well as excellent views of the coastline. This view location also provides close range views of the ocean and rocky coastline. Several hiking trails start from this area and meander amongst the coastal sage scrub and chaparral, eventually leading to the beach. There are few features that detract from this view location, which contributes to its high visual quality ratings. The location of this view is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate/ inevident

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Acute
Distance	Near/intermediate
Position	Above/same

2. Granite Canyon: View Location 7.4.VL2



View Location 7.4.VL2–Granite Canyon (View looking northwest from Highway 1) (MON-1-64.2)

The Granite Canyon View Location consists of a small dirt turnout along the southbound (western) side of the roadway. This view location provides a more intimate view of the ocean, similar to the Kasler Point Vista Point, but also provides longer distance views up the coast. Views of the kelp beds, rocky coastline, and cliffs are the key components of the view. While there are a number of features that detract from the broader visual quality (e.g. houses, barbed wire fences, power poles and road cuts in distant hillside), they do not substantially affect the visual elements that are the focus of the view from this location. The location of the Granite Canyon View is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate
Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Intermediate
Position	Above

E. Yankee Point: Landscape Unit 7.5

Landscape Unit 7.5–Yankee Point (View looking north) (MON-1-65.4/67.2)

This landscape unit is characterized by steep hillsides and cliffs dropping to the ocean. The low lying vegetation reveals broad uninterrupted and striking views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below. There are long rows of cypress trees along the northbound (eastern) side of the highway in many areas, some of which are considered historic landscapes. Most of the trees are associated with homes or along fence lines. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Maps 13 and 14 in Appendix A.

This is the last landscape unit before the character of the highway starts to change dramatically as it enters more developed areas to the north. While the predominant feeling is natural, there are power poles that line the northbound (eastern) side of the road that create a significant detractor from the natural beauty. Roadside signage is also more prevalent given the low-lying vegetation.

One view location and one intrinsic feature were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Lobos Rocks: View Location 7.5.VL1



View Location 7.5.VL1– Lobos Rocks (View looking southwest from Highway 1) (MON-1-67)

The Lobos Rocks View Location consists of a small dirt turnout with an excellent view of Lobos Rocks. There are also distant views of Soberantes Point and Hurricane Point, as well as more intimate views of kelp beds and the rocky coastline. Power lines, road cuts and barbed wire fences are visible from this view location, but do not substantially affect the high visual quality of this view location. The location of this view is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Subordinate

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Acute
Distance	Intermediate/distant
Position	Same/above

2. Lobos Rocks: Intrinsic Feature 7.5.IF1

Intrinsic Feature 7.5.IF1– Lobos Rocks (View looking west from Highway 1) (MON-1-65.6)

Los Lobos Rocks are two large rocks that sit off the coast, just beyond the kelp beds. They are easily recognizable features amongst the rocky coastline because they are the two largest rocks in the area. The mainland terrain in the vicinity of the rocks is gently sloping as a flat coastal bluff extends west from the roadway to the ocean. Farther to the east, the land becomes more steep and mountainous. Low lying coastal sage scrub and chaparral are the prominent vegetation types in this area. There are no structural or man-made features along this section of road. The location of this feature is shown on Map 13 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Feature	Subordinate

F. Otter Cove: Landscape Unit 7.6

Landscape Unit 7.6: Otter Cove (View looking north) (MON-1-67.2/67.9)

The Otter Cove Landscape Unit is characterized by steep hillsides and residential subdivisions that are located between the Coast Highway and the ocean. Nonetheless, there are some uninterrupted and striking views of the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline below within this landscape unit. The roadway is set back farther from the ocean than in other locations to the south. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

Cypress trees and non-native vegetation have been planted, primarily in areas where residences have been built to screen them from view. Roadside signage and power poles reinforce the scenic change from the more natural and open aesthetic of landscape units to the south.

It is at this point along the highway when traveling north that the elements of residences, utilities, signage and the general concentration of urban development begin to substantially affect the visual quality. Views of the ocean and coastline become less often, reducing the vividness of the landscape.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit.

The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance	Co-dominant

POINT LOBOS: VIEWSHED 8

Viewshed 8–Point Lobos (MON-1-67.9/72.4)

Within the Point Lobos Viewshed the road passes through Monterey pine forests and periodically offers small scenic views of rocky coves and rugged coastline. Creeks empty out of forested ravines and pass under small bridges at various points along the roadway. Large homes and mansions can be seen as the road passes through the community of Carmel Highlands. This viewshed becomes more intensely populated with residences, houses and commercial land uses as it heads northward into the City of Carmel. The location of this viewshed is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

Many types of trees, Monterey pine forests, wooded and ocean views, Carmel River, Wildcat Creek, beautiful homes and Carmel Bay are all scenic elements within this viewshed. This mixture of development and natural features is dramatically different and more intense than anywhere else along the Coast Highway. Roadside signage also is much more intense in this viewshed, indicating the increased density of residences and businesses. A quiet and natural respite is provided where the Coast Highway passes through Point Lobos State Reserve. Immediately after this short section the communities of Carmel and Pebble Beach are clearly visible, and homes and shopping centers become the predominant visual image.

The participants at the Scenic Workshop identified two areas within Viewshed 8. The southern half of this viewshed was identified as the “Carmel Highlands” corridor section, which begins at Malpas Creek and ends at Point Lobos. This area is generally consistent with the Carmel Highlands Landscape Unit described below. Participants indicated that one of the most prominent features along this stretch is the Chevron Gas Station. They also noted that the signs associated with many of the area businesses and power poles detract from the overall visual quality of this stretch of the coast.

The northern half of this viewshed was identified by the participants as the “Point Lobos” corridor section, which stretches from Point Lobos to Rio Road. This report breaks this area into two distinct Landscape Units (Point Lobos State Reserve and Carmel River described below). Participants commented that power poles are quite obvious in this area and detract from the overall visual quality. Two unique attributes identified by the participants were the Carmelite Monastery and Carmel River State Beach. Participants also noted the residential development in the area and that their lights are visible at night, traffic is heavy in this stretch (particularly near Carmel River State Beach) and power poles and signage are more prominent.

This scenic viewshed includes three landscape units, two view locations and one intrinsic feature. The visual quality ratings of this viewshed are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

A. Carmel Highlands: Landscape Unit 8.1

Landscape Unit 8.1—Carmel Highlands (View looking north) (MON-1-67.9/69.8)

The Carmel Highlands Landscape Unit winds through Monterey pine and cypress forests. There are many residences, businesses and occasional views of the coast. The roadway is at an elevation of approximately 30 to 60 meters (100 to 200 feet). At many points, the road is enclosed by dense, Monterey pine forests providing only brief views of the ocean and coastline. Because of the intensity of development and landscaped yards, many non-native plants grow along this section of highway. Signage and power poles are also prevalent along the roadway. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

The visual quality of this landscape unit is a dramatic change from areas to the south. Vividness is now dominated by unique residential architecture and mansions in cliff-side settings. While in the classic sense intactness and unity could be considered low due to the mixture and intensity of residential development and natural features, the use of natural materials and landscaping, in attempts to blend structures with the surrounding environment, have been successful in many areas, creating a palatable co-existence of natural and man-made elements.

One view location was identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Bird Island View Location 8.1.VL1



View Location 8.1.VL1–Bird Island (View looking west from turnout along Highway 1 near Highlands Inn) MON-1-9.4)

The Bird Island View Location can be easily overlooked on the southbound (western) side of the roadway directly across from the Highlands Inn. It is a small paved turnout with tall Monterey pine trees and barbed wire at its periphery, blocking most of the view. But a peek through the trees and fencing reveals the picturesque rock formation of Bird Island. Driveways and residences are on either side of the view location and the site itself is littered with trash. Bird Island, the calm waters of the bay and the kelp beds below reward the viewer who takes the time to pull off and take a look. The location of this view is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Inevident

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Near
Position	Above

B. Point Lobos State Reserve: Landscape Unit 8.2

Landscape Unit 8.2–Point Lobos State Reserve (View looking south) (MON-1-69.8/70.6)

The Point Lobos State Reserve Landscape Unit is a stretch of the Coast Highway that is level and passes through a dense forest of Monterey pine and cypress. In fact, Point Lobos State Reserve contains one of the few remaining groves of native Monterey cypress. The now protected sculpted headland of Point Lobos State Reserve was named by the Spanish explorers after the barking sea lions (lobos del mar). Sea lions, otters, and, in winter, whales are often seen offshore or in the many picturesque coves along this landscape unit. Views from the roadway are limited by the dense pine forest that lines the roadway. Because the roadway is more inland in this area, there are no views of the ocean. The forested landscape and lack of development are unique along the highway and quite memorable. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

Several roadside signs and a few power poles are the only detracting features in this landscape unit.

No view locations or intrinsic features were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	High
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

C. Carmel River: Landscape Unit 8.3

Landscape Unit 8.3—Carmel River (View looking south) (MON-1-70.6/72.4)

The Carmel River Landscape Unit is where the road leaves the forested area of Point Lobos State Reserve and the landscape opens up to gently rolling hills. The road's elevation is low and at points close to sea level. Signs of agricultural use are visible (row crops and cattle grazing) on the northbound (eastern) side of the road, along with residential uses on both sides of the road. Small groves of Monterey pine and cypress are also found in this landscape unit, however, chaparral and coastal scrub become more dominant as one travels north. The location of this landscape unit is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

The crescent shaped beach, ocean views and the Carmelite Monastery are the primary scenic features within this landscape unit, giving it relatively high vividness. However, the combination of natural, residential and agricultural land uses tends to reduce the intactness of the landscape and there is little unity between these different elements.

One view location and one intrinsic feature were identified within this landscape unit. The visual quality ratings of this landscape unit are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	Medium
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Co-dominant

1. Carmel River State Beach: View Location 8.3.VL1



View Location 8.3.VL1—Carmel River State Beach (View looking northwest from Carmel River State Beach)
(MON-1-58.3)

The Carmel River State Beach View Location consists of a long dirt turnout along the southbound (western) side of the highway. Carmel River State Beach is a beautiful, crescent-shaped, sandy beach used by beach goers and scuba divers. This view location is extremely popular in good weather and on weekends, which can result in a solid row of parked cars along the southbound (western) shoulder of the Coast Highway, detracting significantly from the overall visual quality of the area. The views from the beach are spectacular and include not only natural elements but also views of the town of Carmel and Pebble Beach and the Monterey Peninsula in the distance. There are some improvements at the beach that detract from the natural setting, including restroom facilities that have been constructed at the southern end of the beach and portable bathrooms that have been placed in the area because of the extensive use. The location of this view is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

The visual quality and viewer exposure ratings of this view location are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	Medium
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of the Coast Highway	Inevident

Viewer Exposure	
Angle	Ideal
Distance	Near/intermediate
Position	Same

2. Carmelite Monastery: Intrinsic Feature 8.3.IF1



Intrinsic Feature 8.3.IF1—Carmelite Monastery (View from looking east from Highway 1)
(MON-1-71.2)

The Carmelite Monastery is a classic Spanish Colonial-style building located off the northbound (eastern) side of the Coast Highway. The monastery is set on a flat grassy plain above the Coast Highway with Monterey pine and cypress framing the historic building. Steep hills form a dramatic backdrop. The monastery is most visible when traveling in the northbound direction. Southbound roadway users may never notice the monastery unless they stop at the Carmel River State Beach, which is directly across the highway. The monastery is considered an intrinsic scenic feature because of its architectural style, landscape and setting. The location of this feature is shown on Map 14 in Appendix A.

The visual quality ratings of this intrinsic feature are as follows:

Visual Quality	Ratings
Vividness	High
Intactness	Medium
Unity	High
Visual Dominance of Feature	Co-dominant

SUMMARY TABLE OF SCENIC QUALITIES

The following table provides a summary of the scenic quality ratings for each Viewshed, Landscape Unit, View Location and Intrinsic Feature described above. For each of the elements the features which contribute to, or detract from, the overall visual quality are also listed.

SUMMARY OF SCENIC QUALITIES

Viewshed 1 – Southern Gateway



	Common Name	Location - PM*	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 1	Southern Gateway	San Carpoforo Creek (SLO** 71.5) to Salmon Creek (SLO 72.1)	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> white sandy beaches creeks ocean rock formations mostly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings fences driveways mailboxes road cuts on distant hillsides signage
Landscape Unit 1.1	San Carpoforo Creek	(SLO) 71.5 - 72.1	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> white sandy beaches creek and drainage mostly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> houses and buildings fences driveways mailboxes signage
Landscape Unit 1.2	Ragged Point	(SLO) 72.1 - 73.0	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ocean rock formations natural landscape sweeping ocean views forested ravines and creeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> houses and buildings fences driveways mailboxes signage
View Location 1.2.VL1	Ragged Point	(SLO) 72.5	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sweeping ocean views San Carpoforo Beach rock formations of Ragged Point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dead and dying eucalyptus trees stumps litter
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 1.2.IF1	Ragged Point Inn	(SLO) 72	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> location architecture utilizes natural colors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings gas station signage non-native plants

* All PMs are in Monterey County (MON) unless otherwise noted

** = San Luis Obispo County

Viewshed 2 – Gorda Coast



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 2	Gorda Coast	Salmon Creek (SLO-1- 73.0) to Cape San Martin (SLO-1-11.4)	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> winding road dramatic variations in elevation forested canyons and ravines waterfalls sweeping ocean views rocky coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> signage metal guard rails barbed wire fences pampas grass/non-native plants
Landscape Unit 2.1	Salmon Creek	SLO-1- 73.0 – MON-1- 7.0	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> winding road dramatic variations in elevation forested canyons and ravines Salmon Creek waterfall mostly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residences metal guard rails barbed wire fences large boulders defining edge of cliffs
View Location 2.1.VL1	Salmon Creek	2.2	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scenic waterfall lush forested ravine/river canyon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> metal guard rails signage for trails and roadways
View Location 2.1.VL2	South Coast	4.65	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protected turnout sweeping view of coast and kelp beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> berms and debris from old landslides large boulders defining edge of cliffs
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 2.1.IF1	Salmon Creek Waterfall	2.2	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scenic waterfall lush forested ravine/river canyon mostly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> metal guard rails signage for trails and roadways
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 2.1.IF2	Water Fountain	3.8	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drinking fountain historic feature rockwork blends nicely with surroundings mostly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> metal pipe un-maintained

Viewshed 2 – Gorda Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Landscape Unit 2.2	Alder Peak	7.0 – 9.9	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large mountains • steep cliffs • dramatic variations in elevation • sweeping ocean views • stone guard rails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • road washout • landslides • pampas grass • road repairs • crib walls • berms and debris from old landslides • driveways • power poles • signage
Landscape Unit 2.3	Gorda	9.9 – 11.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide open spaces • rolling hills • ocean views • steep cliffs • Gorda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buildings • pampas grass
View Location 2.3.VL1	Cape San Martin Overlook	11.35	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape San Martin Rock • views of rugged coastline and bay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trees obstructing views to the south • metal guard rails
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 2.3.IF1	Gorda	10.2	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • architecture • location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage • parking areas

Viewshed 3 – Lucia Coast



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 3	Lucia Coast	Cape San Martin 11.4- Big Creek Coast 24.7	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flat coastal bluffs sandy beaches and coves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pampas grass buildings campgrounds power poles
Landscape Unit 3.1	Cape San Martin	11.4 – 12.1	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dramatic ocean views variations in elevation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landslides road washouts road repair
View Location 3.1.VL1	Willow Creek Picnic Grounds	11.8	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> close-up/intermediate views of ocean, coves and inlets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> signage large boulders defining edge of cliffs
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 3.1.IF1	Cape San Martin	11.5	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large rock formation beach and coves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pampas grass berms and debris from landslides
Landscape Unit 3.2	Plaskett Creek	12.1 – 13.2	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steep, rocky hillsides steep drop-offs to ocean striking views rocky coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pampas grass dirt roads driveways
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 3.2.IF1	San Martin Park	12.25	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> possible historic feature rockwork blends nicely with surroundings large boulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pampas grass other non-native plants and grasses semi-maintained
Landscape Unit 3.3	Pacific Valley	13.2 – 16.54	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low coastal bluffs flat grassy plains cliffs agriculture white sandy beaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> remnants of buildings where the town of Pacific Valley burned down Sand Dollar Beach parking lot

Viewshed 3 – Lucia Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 3.3.IF1	Plaskett Creek Rock/ Sand Dollar Beach	14.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long, white, sandy, crescent shaped beach • Plaskett Creek Rock • flat coastal bluffs • coves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage • parking facility
Landscape Unit 3.4	Wild Cattle Creek	16.45 – 18.45	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steep rocky mountains • cliffs dropping to ocean • striking views • rocky coastline • mainly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pampas grass • metal guard rails • signage • road cuts
Landscape Unit 3.5	Kirk Creek	18.45 – 19.0	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forested river canyons • close-up/intermediate views of ocean, coves and inlets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Service Parks • metal guard rails • signage • road cuts • pampas grass
View Location 3.5.VL1	Mill Creek	18.65	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close-up/intermediate views of ocean, coves and inlets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metal guard rails • signage • road cuts • pampas grass
Landscape Unit 3.6	Los Padres	19.0 – 20.9	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steep rocky mountains • cliffs dropping to ocean • striking views • rocky coastline • mainly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metal guard rails • road cuts • pampas grass
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 3.6.IF1	Rockland Roadside Park	20.4	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • historic feature • rockwork blends nicely with surroundings • waterfall • ocean views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pampas grass

Viewshed 3 – Lucia Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Landscape Unit 3.7	Rain Rocks	20.9 – 22.1	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dramatic ocean views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landslides road washouts road repair chain link netting on cliffs pampas grass
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 3.7.IF1	Limekiln State Park/ Rockland Landing	21.0	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> redwood trees sandy beach and cove steep ravines creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> campsites signage
Landscape Unit 3.8	Lucia	22.1 – 23.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucia rolling hills and open terrain native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings signage driveways
Landscape Unit 3.9	Lopez Point	23.4 – 24.7	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steep rocky mountains cliffs dropping to ocean striking views rocky coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> metal guard rails dirt roads road cuts pampas grass

Viewshed 4 – Central Big Sur Coast



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 4	Central Big Sur Coast	Big Creek Coast 24.7 – Upper Big Sur Valley 44.3	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transition zone • forested ravines • many creeks • stone guard rails • rocky coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage • power poles • road cuts • berms and landslide rubble
Landscape Unit 4.1	Big Creek Coast	24.7 – 32.65	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steep rocky hillsides • steep cliffs dropping to ocean • extensive views of ocean and coastline • mainly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage • metal guard rails • fences • road cuts
View Location 4.1.VL1	Big Creek Bridge	27.3	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Creek Bridge • extensive views of ocean and coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crib walls • road reinforcements
View Location 4.1.VL2	Square Black Rock	28.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square Black Rock • intermediate views of ocean and coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • berms and landslide rubble
View Location 4.1.VL3	Lopez Point	29.7	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intermediate views of ocean and coastline • Square Black Rock in distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • berms and landslide rubble
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 4.1.IF1	Lopez Point Rock	25.1	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noticeable feature in ocean • marks location of Lopez Point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no detractors
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 4.1.IF2	Rigdon Drinking Fountain	26.9	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drinking fountain • historic feature • rockwork blends nicely with surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unmaintained

Viewshed 4 – Central Big Sur Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 4.1.IF3	Big Creek Bridge	28.1	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big Creek Bridge intermediate views of ocean and coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pampas grass
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 4.1.IF4	Square Black Rock	28.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Square Black Rock rolling hills steep cliffs dropping to ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no detractors
Landscape Unit 4.2	Esalen Coast	32.65 – 35.8	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Santa Lucia Mountain Range numerous creeks and rivers forest waterfalls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings guard rails bridges power poles metal mailboxes berms and landslide rubble
Landscape Unit 4.3	Partington Coast	35.8 – 42.9	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steep rocky hillsides steep cliffs dropping to ocean extensive views of ocean and coastline mainly native vegetation creeks redwood forests stone guard rails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pampas grass Coast Gallery
View Location 4.3.VL1	McWay Overlook	36.9	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> views of ocean and coastline to the south 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> both large boulders and fence in turnout defining edge of cliff
View Location 4.3.VL2	Partington Cove	37.8	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> close-up view of small lush ravine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dirt fire road metal guard rail
View Location 4.3.VL3	Lafler Canyon	41.0	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sweeping ocean views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large boulders defining edge of cliff
Landscape Unit 4.4	Ventana Inn	42.9 – 44.3	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> winding uphill climb redwood forests funky, colorful mailboxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> power poles more signs of urban development

Viewshed 4 – Central Big Sur Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 4.4.IF1	Deetjen's Big Sur Inn	43.1	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• historic landmark• rustic• blends nicely with environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• structures• driveways• closeness to highway• signage
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 4.4.IF2	Nepenthe	43.8	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• architecture• views• history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• crowds• commercial• signage• driveways and parking

Viewshed 5 – Big Sur Valley



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 5	Big Sur Valley	Upper Big Sur 44.3 – Point Sur Approach 54.7	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steep mountains Big Sur River redwood forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resort areas signage power poles neon lights non-native vegetation in developed areas naval facility
Landscape Unit 5.1	Upper Big Sur Valley	44.3 – 46.6	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dense forest steep hillsides Ventana Wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings signage
Landscape Unit 5.2	Lower Big Sur Valley	46.6 – 49.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> redwood forest riparian habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings signage neon signs power poles gas stations parking lots and fences
Landscape Unit 5.3	Andrew Molera South	49.4 – 50.9	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> river valley less human development oak woodlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> signage power poles fences
Landscape Unit 5.4	Andrew Molera North	50.9 – 51.9	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rolling hills low coastal plain chaparral and grassland open views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> signage fences

Viewshed 5 – Big Sur Valley

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
<i>Landscape Unit 5.5</i>	El Sur Ranch	51.9 – 54.7	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chaparral and grassland• open views	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fences• cattle grazing• naval facility
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 5.5.IF1	Point Sur	54.5	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point Sur• historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• structures• access road

Viewshed 6 – Point Sur Coast



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 6	Point Sur Coast	Point Sur Approach 54.7 – Bixby Landing 58.3	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stretches of white sandy beach • rock formations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power poles • fences • minor road cuts
Landscape Unit 6.1	Point Sur Approach	54.7 – 58.3	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extensive ocean views • sand dunes • steep, high road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • road repairs • crib walls • guard rails • ice plant
Landscape Unit 6.2	Little Sur River	55.7 – 56.5	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Sur River • low coastal plain • white sandy beach • beautiful river canyon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fences • viaduct
Landscape Unit 6.3	Sierra Hill	56.5 – 58.3	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extensive ocean views • tall mountains • steep cliffs dropping to ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power poles • fences • minor road cuts • guard rails
View Location 6.3.VL1	Point Sur	58.0	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intermediate ocean views • Point Sur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • road cuts in hillside

Viewshed 7 – Bixby Coast



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 7	Bixby Coast	Bixby Landing 58.3 – Carmel Highlands 67.9	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steep and mountainous flat coastal bluffs and cliffs unobstructed views of beaches, coves and ocean forested ravines and creeks arched bridges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> road cuts guard rails power lines north – more signs of development
Landscape Unit 7.1	Bixby Landing	58.3 – 59.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steep and mountainous flat coastal bluffs and cliffs Bixby Bridge unobstructed views of beaches, coves and ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> road cuts road repairs house on hill above Bixby Bridge
View Location 7.1.VL1	Hurricane Point	58.3	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high elevation sweeping ocean views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> popular viewpoint large boulders defining edge of cliff
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 7.1.IF1	Hurricane Point	58.3	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one of the most westerly points along the coast high elevation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> major road cut on point
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 7.1.IF2	Bixby Landing	59.4	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> small protected bay Bixby Bridge Bixby Creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no detractors
Landscape Unit 7.2	Rocky Point	59.6 – 61.9	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> varying landscape Rocky Creek Bridge creek rocky coastline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residences signage power poles small road cuts

Viewshed 7 – Bixby Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 7.2.If2	Rocky Creek Bridge	60.1	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scenic bridge • scenic canyon • creek • ocean views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residences
Landscape Unit 7.3	Kasler Point	62.9	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flat coastal bluffs and cliffs • unobstructed views of ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residences • signage • power poles • small road cuts
View Location 7.3.VL1	Kasler Point	62.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intimate close range view of small rocky inlet and kelp beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chain fence
Landscape Unit 7.4	Soberanes Point	62.9 – 65.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flat coastal bluffs and cliffs (west) • steep hillsides (east) • unobstructed views of ocean, bluffs and kelp beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage • power poles • road cuts
View Location 7.4.VL1	Garrapata Creek	62.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • views of ocean and rocky shoreline • Los Lobos Rocks in distance • mainly native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dirt trails through chaparral
View Location 7.4.VL2	Granite Canyon	64.2	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • varying views of rocky coastline, cliffs and kelp beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power poles • barbed wire fences
Landscape Unit 7.5	Yankee Point	65.4 – 67.2	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steep hillsides and cliffs • broad uninterrupted views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more developed • power poles • signage
View Location 7.5.VL1	Los Lobos Rocks	67.0	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • view of Los Lobos Rocks • more distant views up and down the coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power poles • barbed wire fences
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 7.5.IF1	Los Lobos Rocks	65.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picturesque rock formation of Los Lobos Rocks • mainly native vegetation • close-up views of the ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no detractors

Viewshed 7 – Bixby Coast

	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
<i>Landscape Unit 7.6</i>	Otter Cove	67.2 –67.9	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• varying views of rocky coastline, cliffs and kelp beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• residential subdivisions• power poles• non-native vegetation• signage

Viewshed 8 – Point Lobos



	Common Name	Location - PM	Overall Visual Quality	Contributors to Visual Quality	Detractors from Visual Quality
Viewshed 8	Point Lobos	Carmel highlands 67.9 – Carmel River 72.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monterey pine forests wooded and ocean views creeks and rivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased density of residences and businesses signage
Landscape Unit 8.1	Carmel Highlands	67.9 – 69.8	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> brief views of ocean and coastline native Monterey pine forests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase density of residences and businesses signage
View Location 8.1.VL1	Bird Island	69.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> picturesque rock formation of Bird Rock close up views of ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trash barbed wire
Landscape Unit 8.2	Point Lobos Reserve State Park	69.8 – 70.6	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> native Monterey pine forests enclosing the highway Los Lobos Reserve State Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some signage power poles
Landscape Unit 8.3	Carmel River	70.6 – 72.4	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rolling hills sea level beautiful crescent shaped beach chaparral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residences signage
View Location 8.3.VL1	Carmel River State Beach	71.2	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beautiful crescent shaped beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beach restroom facilities
Intrinsic Scenic Feature 8.3.IF1	Carmelite Monastery	71.2	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classic California-style architecture nice landscaping natural setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no detractors

Appendix A Scenic Qualities Map Sheets

**Appendix B Summary of Scenic Conservation
Planning Workshop
and
Sample Photographs**

Appendix C

Big Sur Coast Highway Management Plan

Tabulation of Viewer Response Questionnaire

Users of the Coast Highway were surveyed over two weekends in May (May 5/6 and May 12/13). Completed questionnaires were collected and the results tabulated below.

1. Where do you live (nearest city, town or community)?

California: Big Sur-17, Monterey-4, Carmel-3, Salinas-2, Palo Alto-2, Los Altos-3, Santa Cruz-4, Los Gatos-1, Gilroy-1, Prunedale-1, Point Sur -1, Sausalito-1, Fremont-1, Sacramento-1, San Francisco-3, Sunnyvale-1, San Joaquin Valley-1, Visalia-1, Grover Beach-1, Atascadero-1, Long Beach-1, Los Angeles-2, Venice-1, Corona-1, Spreckles-1, Piedras Blancas-1, Dana Pt.-1, Ragged Point-1, Berkeley-1, West Covina-1, Aptos-1
Florida: Gainesville-1
New York: New York City-1
Colorado: Denver-1

2. For what purpose do you use the highway? (# indicates number of responses that checked the box)

20 To commute
6 To go to school
21 To go shopping
21 During the course of conducting work (e.g. deliveries)
64 For general sightseeing/recreation/driving
9 Other

3. Is the visual character of the Coast Highway important to you? (# indicates number of responses that checked the box)

Yes 67 No 1

4. Which views or viewpoints along the highway do you consider most important and why? Please be as specific as possible (e.g. view of Notley's Landing from Rocky Point).

Point Sur/Lighthouse-18, Little Sur River/Beach-5, Bixby Bridge-15, Hurricane Point-6, View from Nepenthe-3, Torre Canyon-1, McWay Beach-1, Big Creek Bridge-1, Gamboa Point-1, Lopez point-1, Sand dollar-1, Salmon Creek falls-1, San Carpoforo-1, Garrapata-1, Andrew Molera to Big Sur Inn-1, Notley's Landing/Rocky Point-1, Julia Pfeiffer Burns-5, Lucia to Carmel-2, Upper Big Sur Valley-1, Carmel River-1, Pacific Valley-2, Lucia-1, Hill Ranch-1, Funt Rand-1, Ragged Point to Carmel-1, Willow Creek-2, Soda Springs-1, Pedwood Patch-1, Cape San Martin-1, All-15.

5. What scenic features or landmarks (natural and/or man-made) that you can see from the highway are important to you?

Cliffs/mountains-12, trees-5, coastline/beaches-5, bridges-11, off-shore rocks and islands-1, native habitat onshore-1, river mouths, redwoods, Point Sur/Lighthouse-16, Big Sur Village-1, grasslands-3, Lucia-1, Gorda-1, Pacific Valley-1, Lobos Rocks-1, Little Sur River-1, Bixby Ranch-4, El Sur Ranch-1, Nepenthe-4, Highlands Inn-2, Henry miller Library-1, Partington cove-1, Mt. Manuel-1, Esalen-1, Andrew Molera-2, Julia Pfeiffer Burns-1, Pfeiffer park-1, Jade Cove-1, Rocky Creek-1, Willow Creek-1, Alder Creek Beach-1, Soda Springs-1, Salmon Creek Falls-1, Arroyo de la Cruz-1, Cape San Martin-1, Ventana Sign-1, Garapata State Park-1, All-1..

6. Rank the following features in terms of how they **detract** from the visual quality of the areas along the highway. (use a scale of 1-5, with 5 indicating the worst level of detracting and 1 being the least) (**# indicates average score**)

 2.5 Non-native plants (pampas grass, ice plant, cape ivy)
 2.7 Roadside signage
 3.4 Residential development
 3.8 Commercial development
 2.0 Landslides/Slope repair efforts
 2.2 Lighting
 2.3 Fences
 1.7 Guard rails
 3.3 Power poles
 1.8 Road cuts
 .6 Other

7. Rank the following features in terms of how they **contribute** to the visual quality of the areas along the highway. (use a scale of 1-5, with 5 indicating the highest quality of contribution and 1 being the lowest) (**# indicates average score**)

 2.7 Man-made historic structures
 1.6 Man-made contemporary structures
 2.6 Cultural landscapes
 4.2 Trees
 4.2 Forested areas
 4.0 Rock outcroppings
 4.3 Panoramic views
 4.1 Close-up ocean views
 4.0 Native plants
 3.7 Rural character

8. Looking at the following photographs, please fill out the information below.

Photo A

Overall visual quality

High: 16

Medium: 44

Low: 7



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Diverse landscape, no power poles or fences, mountains-5, meadow, vegetation-3, trees-3, open space, low impact bridge, well maintained and nicely painted buildings, river-2, restoration, old ranch, wildflowers.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Landslide repair-4, structures, roads-3, slide area-2, fences-2, modern bridge, path on hillside, homes-2, non-native vegetation, new guardrails, development.

Photo B

Overall visual quality

High: 22

Medium: 25

Low: 17



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Hills, trees-2, rocky cliffs-3, rock guardrail-3, no visual intrusion, geology, native plants-2, ruggedness, pullout- safety, winding/nature of the road.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Road cuts-2, tour busses, guardrail, pavement, sparse vegetation, highway, turnout, antenna, the car.

Photo C

Overall visual quality

High: 6

Medium: 18

Low: 32



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Open landscape, hills-2, trees-5, quaint village, windmill-2, boat-2, opportunity to stop and meet the locals.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Signs-2, power poles-2, parking area, structures, fences-3, guardrails-2, windmill, vehicles, pampas grass-2, highway, human impact, Gorda, gas sign-2, poor off street parking.

Photo D

Overall visual quality:

High: 50

Medium: 11

Low: 0



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Panoramic vistas, mountains-3, shoreline, ocean-7, cliffs-2, native plants-3, rugged uninhabited land, kelp, trees, lack of development, all.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Landslide repairs, guardrails-3, uneven pavement, erosion, ice plant, road cut scars-2, cut at hurricane-2, road bracing.

Photo E

Overall visual quality

High: 48

Medium: 18

Low: 2



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Panoramic vistas, (rolling green) hills, vegetation-2, bridge-4, ocean-3, coastal bluff, natural shelf, rocky points, farm, openness and freedom to walk, .

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Landslide repair, road cuts-2, brown field, grazed landscape, house, erosion control, electronic/phone poles-2.

Photo F

Overall visual quality

High: 19

Medium: 31

Low: 13



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Undeveloped landscape, mountains, trees, birds of prey sitting on power poles, open land-2, native vegetation-2, cypresses, small off street parking.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Power poles/lines-6, parking area, vehicles-2, highway, trash.

Photo G

Overall visual quality

High: 31

Medium: 24

Low: 6



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Long views, open space, lack of development, proximity to ocean-2, rugged landscape-2, beach, dramatic mountain.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Lack of vegetation-2, trash-6, weeds-2, ugly pullout, pampas grass, slide damage.

Photo H

Overall visual quality

High: 35

Medium: 21

Low: 0



List features that contribute to the scenic quality:

Open vista-2, pampas grass-2, ocean-2, trees, mountains.

List features that detract from the scenic quality:

Pampas grass-2, super size turn out-2.